IL 6

ILLITERACY IN AMERICA

Extent, Causes, and Suggested Solutions

The National Advisory Council on Adult Education

Y 3.Ed 8/4:2

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ADULT EDUCATION

Members

Lily R. Balian
Director, Civic Action
Northrop Corporation
Los Angeles, California
(1982/87)

Daniel E. Brennan, Sr.
Brennan, McNamara & Brennan, P.C.
Bridgeport, Connecticut
(1982/85)

Frances S. Buchholzer
Akron, Ohio
(1986)

Bobby L. Chain
Chairman, Chief Executive Officer
Chain Electric Company
Hattiesburg, Mississippi
(1984/87)

Patric Dorsey
Secretary, Cultural Resources
State of North Carolina
Raleigh, North Carolina
(1982/86)

Mae M. Duggan
Executive Director
The Thomas J. White Foundation
St. Louis, Missouri
(1984/87)

Thelma P. Duggin
Director of Government Relations
Comprehensive Benefits Service Company
Washington, D.C.
(1985/88)

Julia G. Fernald
Chairman
The William Patterson Foundation
Upper Montclair, New Jersey
(1984/87)

Joyce L. Gorringe
Owner-Manager
Joy Dale Farms
Hebron, Indiana
(1982/88)

Nancy H. Hill
Monroe, New Hampshire
(1982/85)

Mary S. Jackson
Owner
Davidsonville Diversified Services
Davidsonville, Maryland
(1982/86)

Michael Marino
Associate
Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb
New York, New York
(1982/84)

Nicholas M. Nikitas
President
Nikitas Family Inns
Kingston, Massachusetts
(1985/88)

M. Lester O'Shea
Managing Partner
General Western Company
San Francisco, California
(1983/86)

Louis S. Ridgeway
President
Investments/Properties
San Diego, California
(1982/84)

Ronna Romney
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
(1984/85)

Donald F. Shea
St. Anthony's Church
Falls Church, Virginia
(1985/88)

Abraham Shemtov
Regional Director
Philadelphia Lubavitcher Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
(1984/88)

Patricia H. Smith
Cultural Arts Coordinator
City of Columbus
Columbus, Ohio
(1982/84)

Rawlein G. Soberano
Administrative Assistant
Minority Small Business and Capital Ownership Development
Small Business Administration
Washington, D.C.
(1982/84)

Mary E. Strother
Basic Skills Director
Peoria Unified School District #1
Peoria, Arizona
(1982/85)

Ruth R. Thone
Lincoln, Nebraska
(1982/84)

J. Ben Trujillo
Owner
JBT Financial Group
Denver, Colorado
(1982/87)

Kathleen Wilcoxson
Teacher
Oklahoma City Schools
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
(1982/85)

Henry Yee
Certified Public Accountant
Huntington Beach, California
(1985/86)

Illiteracy in America: Extent, Causes, and Suggested Solutions

The National Advisory Council on Adult Education Literacy Committee

Patricia H. Smith, *Chairperson*
Lily Ring Balian
Daniel E. Brennan, Sr.
Joyce Lee Gorringe
Mary S. Jackson
Ruth R. Thone

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402

In Memory
of
Daniel E. Brennan, Sr.
NACAE Member, 1982–1985

FOREWORD

This report is an outgrowth of the frustration of the NACAE when, as enthusiastic new appointees, we were unable to find the information we needed to carry out our legal mandate. Told repeatedly by educators that federal funds to combat adult illiteracy were insufficient, we tried to determine what amount would be sufficient—how bad the problem is and what success this country is having in combating it. We were amazed to find that no one really knows. What we did find was a lack of data to substantiate any claim of need, no plans to gather the data, and a confusing range of estimates of the number of illiterates.

As we performed our duties—visiting adult education centers, attending meetings related to illiteracy, and hearing the authorities who addressed us—always seeking the extent of the problem and the extent of our failure to solve the problem, we were impressed with the dedication of adult educators who were committed to helping people with a wide range of reading needs. But while we could understand why some adult students had not graduated from high school, we could not understand how those who were obviously able to learn and were now doing so, had not benefited more from our system of compulsory education. Much of what we learned convinced us that many wasted years could be prevented.

So our Council, as then constituted (nine of our fifteen members being educators—three holding doctorates in education), appointed a committee to take a critical look at the *status quo*. This Literacy Committee was asked to prepare a report to:

- determine the reasons for the widely varying estimates of illiteracy in America,
- discuss why the agency charged with transmitting literacy, the public school system, has not accomplished this task to the satisfaction of many citizens,
- recommend improvements, especially for the educational system, to reduce and ultimately—to the extent possible—eradicate illiteracy.

We began our work, unaware that other reports were being prepared. Naturally, as one after another of these documents was published, we wondered whether ours was still necessary. But, after assessing the contribution each made, we concluded that our report differed from the others in that it:

- takes a broad approach—treating the recent educational problems from a historical perspective, and in relation to the overall functioning of the educational system,
- explains the causes of achievement decline in order to show the barriers to reform,
- stresses the importance of pre-school and elementary education, where illiteracy problems begin,
- emphasizes illiteracy,
- gives explanations for the recommendations made.

While we have tried to be thorough, there are areas that we could really only touch upon—areas which deserve serious, in-depth study, such as how committed this nation really is to literacy over and above economic considerations; and the superficial treatment of complex issues, e.g., the relationship between teachers' salaries and quality education, and between youthful delinquent behavior and the completion of high school. There are other areas we did attempt to discuss that also need more serious attention such as the lack of emphasis upon and lay control of curriculum, the lack of effective evaluation of our educational process, and the lack of knowledge about or implementation of what we know will work.

Of course, there are some issues in our report that other reports have considered and which are beginning to be addressed. In those instances we feel reinforcement can be helpful, for as we point out in our conclusion, the resistance to change is great and the national attention span can be short. Further, the educational pendulum is forever swinging. The public outcry for educational reform has forced the classroom door open only a crack. The real test is what happens in the classroom when the door is closed. And that largely remains to be seen.

Patricia H. Smith, *Chairperson*
Literacy Committee
National Advisory Council on
Adult Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with any effort of this kind, there are many people to be thanked. First, there are those who contributed directly to the writing of the report itself: editors—Ted Hope of St. Louis, Missouri; Cher Paul and Tricia Herban of Columbus, Ohio; the treatment of how reading is taught, i.e., phonics vs. look-say methods—Michael Brunner, Washington, D.C.; the summary of the College Entrance Examination Board's assessment of test-score decline—Dr. Karen Scheid, the State of Ohio Department of Education; and the typists—Joan Morrison and Barbara Hicks, Columbus, Ohio.

Second, as this report relies heavily on a review of literature, recognition must be given to those authors, critics, and educators who obviously felt passionately about education, and who so eloquently described the points we were striving to share. A work that should be singled out, as it is cited often, is Diane Ravitch's *The Troubled Crusade.*

Third, while this report is critical of much of what has happened in recent years in public education, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that there are many dedicated educators who resisted the latest innovation craze, who continued to offer challenging courses and motivate the young to learn, and who welcome reform.

A special thanks goes to Adult Basic Education (ABE) State Directors—especially those from Arizona, California, Ohio, Maryland, and Virginia—and to those local ABE directors and teachers who are so dedicated to reducing illiteracy and who have been so very helpful to Council members during our visitations and in fulfilling our requests.

Gratitude is expressed to our former and current executive directors, Rick Ventura and Lynn Ross Wood, respectively; to staff members Helen Banks and Karen M. Shepard; and to the other NACAE members for their patience and support.

Finally, Dan Brennan, while sometimes a worthy adversary, was a respected colleague and a good man—absolutely outraged that illiteracy exists in this country. We were all saddened by his death before publication of this report, and agreed to dedicate it to his memory.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1
- The Extent of the Problem 2
- The Causes of the Problem 2
- Suggested Solutions to the Problem 3
  - Curriculum and Instruction 3
  - The Teaching Profession 4
  - Local Administration 4
  - Research 4
  - The System and Structure of Education 4
  - National Attitudes Toward Education 5
  - Illiteracy 5
- Conclusion 5

INTRODUCTION 7

THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM 9

Conflicting Definitions Create Conflicting Estimates 9

- Adult Illiteracy 9
  - Definitions 9
  - Estimates 9
- Functional Illiteracy 10

Illiteracy and the Economy 11

- Business and Industrial Needs 11
- Unemployment and Productivity Concerns 11
- The Credentialing Factor 11
- The Change to a Technological/Information Society 12

Other Compounding Factors 12

- The Impact of the Military 12
- The Impact of Refugees and Immigrants 13
- Cultural Literacy 13
- Lack of Data 13
- The Inflation of Estimates 13

Summary 14

THE CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM 15

Introduction: A Historical Perspective 15

- Conflict 16
- Influential Groups 17

A Philosophical Shift: Traditional to Progressive 17

- The "Life Adjustment" Philosophy and Its Critics 18
- Progressivism Revisited 20
- Curriculum Changes 21
  - Reading 22
  - English 25
  - New Math 27
  - Social Studies 28
- Organizational Changes 28
  - Open Education 28
  - Free Schools 29
  - No Schools 29
  - Ability Grouping 29
- The Critics 29

The Societal Shift: Traditional to Permissive 31

- Increased Viewing of Television 31
- Effects of TV Viewing 32
- Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse 32
- Effects of Abuse 33
- The Student Protest Movement 33
- Effects of the Movement 33
- The Change in the Perception of Childhood 34
  - Preparers, Protectors, and Liberators 34
  - Permissive Parents 35
  - Other Factors 35
  - Effects 35
- Growth of Egalitarianism and Its Effects 35

The Governance Shift: Local to State and Federal; Lay to Professional 36

- Increased Federal Role 36
- The Courts 37
- Increased State Involvement 37
- Special Interest Groups 38
  - Teacher Unions 38
  - Division of the Education Coalition 39
- Result: An Unresponsive Bureaucracy 39

The Result of All Three Shifts: A Loss of Authority 39

- The Impact of the Philosophical Shift 40
- The Impact of the Societal Shift 40
- The Impact of the Governance Shift 40

Can We Hold the Schools Responsible? 41

- A Review of Public School Achievement 42
- The SAT 43
- Other Test Patterns 44

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTION OF THE PROBLEM 47

In Response to the Philosophical Shift 47

- Improve the teaching of reading 47
- More strictly evaluate educational materials, and reassess the criteria for selection 48

    - Materials should be sufficiently challenging ... 48
  - Upgrade curricula ... 50
  - Increase the productive use of time in school ... 50
  - Instill positive attitudes and teach ethical behavior, especially in the early years ... 51
  - Determine what factors cause discipline problems in the schools and eliminate them ... 52
  - Objectively evaluate preschool programs to determine their long-term educational value, their effects on the child and family, and how they should be funded ... 53
  - Provide early screening to detect special needs ... 54
  - Standardized testing programs should more effectively monitor student achievement, especially in relation to student potential ... 54
  - Progression through school should be based on the mastery of skills ... 55
  - Re-establish credible standards for the measurement of academic progress ... 56
  - Determine the factors that improve student achievement and disseminate the findings to teachers, administrators, and local and state school board members. Successful programs and methods should be publicized and implemented ... 57

In Response to the Societal Shift ... 57

  - Develop More Effective Drop-Out Prevention ... 57
    Measures; Reassess the System of Compulsory Education ... 57
    - Identification ... 57
    - Poor Reading Skills: A Contributing Factor ... 58
    - The Delinquency Factor ... 58
    - Compulsory Education ... 59
  - Emphasize the Need for Broad-based Responsibility for Instilling Positive Attitudes and Improving Student Accomplishment ... 59

In Response to the Governance Shift ... 59

  - Initiate Reforms to Make the Public School System More Responsive and Accountable ... 59
    - Responsiveness ... 59
    - Competition ... 60
    - Reform ... 61
  - Improve the Education of Administrators, Principals, and Local School Board Members ... 63
    - Administrators ... 63
    - Principals ... 63
    - Board Members ... 63
  - The Impact of Collective Bargaining on the Educational System ... 64
    - The Deepening Adversarial Relationship Between the Teachers and the Board and Administration ... 64
    - The Increased Costs of the Negotiating Process ... 64
    - The Possibly Negative Impact on Student Learning ... 64
    - Support for and Affiliation With a National Union—an Anathema to Many Americans ... 64
    - Loss of Public Support for Education ... 65
  - Analyze the Selection, Training, Compensation, Promotion, and Dismissal of Teachers ... 65
    - Attracting Qualified People to the Profession ... 65
    - Providing Appropriate and Comprehensive Training ... 66
    - Keeping Qualified People in the Profession ... 66
    - Improving Performance and Dismissing Poor Teachers ... 67
  - Further Examine the Federal Role in Education ... 68
    - Research ... 68
    - Leadership ... 68
    - Funding ... 69

CONCLUSION ... 73

Summary of the Stated and Implied Recommendations in the Report ... 73

  - Curriculum and Instruction ... 73
  - The Teaching Profession ... 74
  - Local Administration ... 74
  - Research ... 75
  - The System and Structure of Education ... 75
  - National Attitudes Toward Education ... 75
  - Illiteracy ... 75

REFLECTIONS OF A COMMITTEE MEMBER ... 77

WHAT PRICE DESEGREGATION ... 81

REFERENCES ... 83

INDEX ... 91

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report about the prevention of adult illiteracy. It discusses the reasons why estimates of the number of illiterates vary so much, and reveals why it is so difficult to substantiate any of the estimates.

Who are the adult illiterates? They are high school dropouts and high school graduates, immigrants, and illegal aliens. This report focuses on those who have come through our public education system. Since schools are the entity charged with transmitting literacy, they offer the best hope of remedy.

American public education today is viewed, in this report, from the perspective that shaped it: yesterday's educational theories and philosophies. Such an approach, together with a discussion of the effects of social change, shows the forces that have influenced our educational system, and thereby explains why current problems exist and why there are barriers to the solutions of these problems. What were these forces? The increased acceptance of progressive educational philosophy by unionized educators resulted in substantial changes in curriculum and resistance to accountability for student achievement. The unprecedented intrusion of the courts and the federal government into local schools resulted in a loss of local control. The concurrent social upheaval resulted in a loss of adult authority. All converged to disrupt the traditional educational checks and balances and changed our educational system. While recognizing that many things influence the level of literacy attained by our citizens, this report concludes that educators themselves are largely responsible for many of the problems. Finally, the report offers recommendations for improving achievement and reducing illiteracy, and gives the reasons for these recommendations.

The scope of this report is broader than that of most of the other recently published ones, because a more thorough explanation is needed of how our educational system functions. Only then can we understand why many of the reforms that are currently being called for are indeed necessary, but will also be difficult to achieve.

The National Advisory Council on Adult Education (NACAE) decided to compile this information for several reasons. The NACAE was unable to determine the extent of adult illiteracy in this country and therefore could not determine how many people were not being served by the present system. There simply were insufficient data on which to base considered recommendations to the President and to Congress. Further, there seemed to be no plans to gather the necessary data. At the same time there was intensified public clamor about literacy problems and Council members were constantly admonished to recommend increased funding to remediate adult illiterates.

They were also told that the number of illiterates was growing. Consequently, the Council began to question why taxpayers should fund the expansion of a system to accommodate an increasing number of adult illiterates when these same taxpayers were already supporting free public compulsory education. Moreover on visitations to adult education centers, members encountered students who were obviously capable of learning but who had been passed through the system without becoming literate. In addition, our members learned that approximately one million young Americans drop out of school annually—obviously potential candidates for an already over-crowded and apparently under-funded system of adult education. Becoming increasingly concerned with prevention as well as remediation of adult illiteracy, the Council appointed a committee to prepare a report that would:

- determine the reasons for the widely varying estimates of illiteracy in America,
- identify the reasons why the agency charged with transmitting literacy, the public school system, has not accomplished this task to the satisfaction of many citizens, recommend improvements, especially for the educational system, to reduce and ultimately eradicate — to the extent possible — illiteracy.

While the committee's work was underway, other reports were being published. After reviewing these reports, committee members felt increasingly justified and reinforced in their decision to question the *status quo*. At the same time, they were concerned that the Council's work might be redundant, and that the public might have become satiated with recommendations for reform. Neither fear seems to be realized, and while obviously some topics in the Council's study are covered in other documents, this report contributes to the current reform movement in that it:

- puts the recent achievement decline into historic perspective,
- discusses the causes of educational problems as well as the barriers to their solutions,
- takes a broad approach, treating some facets of the educational system not discussed in other reports; e.g., the role of school boards,
- considers all levels of education,
- gives explanations for its recommendations,
- focuses on adult illiteracy as a consequence of a failure of our educational system and suggests that the kinds and extent of illiteracy be clarified in order to effect solutions.

The Extent of the Problem

There is much confusion about the extent of illiteracy in the United States because definitions of literacy vary greatly, resulting in conflicting estimates of the extent of the problem. Adding to the confusion is the fact that grade-level completion and census statistics are not reliable indicators of literacy attainment. Nor is literacy a static concept. The impact of changing and differing literacy needs on illiteracy estimates is well-recognized, as is the relatively new concept of "functional" illiteracy. The relationship between literacy and the economy is discussed in light of business and industrial needs for and concern over the lack of a literate workforce. Other factors impacting estimates of illiteracy that are discussed are: the needs of the military, the escalation of credentials, the increasing numbers of refugees and immigrants, the importance of cultural literacy, the lack of reliable data, and the possibility of inflation of estimates. The truth of the matter is that we really do not know which, if any, of the estimates of the number of illiterates is accurate. We should know. It is important that we clarify the problem in order to solve it effectively. We must, for example, stop confusing the inability to read with the inability to function successfully in society. The designation of different levels of illiteracy is suggested to identify the problem with greater precision and to offer better solutions.

The Causes of the Problem

Because Americans charge the public school system with creating and maintaining a literate citizenry, this committee examined the evolution of that system. From the earliest days of public schooling, different groups have held different expectations of education. But as the public school system developed a virtual monopoly on the delivery of educational services, the lack of commonly held expectations and the limited choice of educational facility combined to spawn a host of questions about American public schools: Should education be offered for its own sake or as training for a career? Should attention be directed toward developing the whole child or concentrate on the development of cognitive skills? Should methodology include experiential learning or focus solely on rote learning? Should students be grouped by ability or heterogenously? Should children be bused or served by neighborhood schools? Should the focus be on insuring equality or insisting on excellence? There are more. One of the longest-standing conflicts, but one that is confined mostly to the profession, is the degree to which phonics should be emphasized in reading instruction.

The historic dilemmas and conflicts have been exacerbated in recent years by social changes: an increasingly materialistic and permissive society; the turmoil resulting from the civil rights struggle; the phenomenal and not-yet comprehended impact of television; the changing perception of childhood; and the widespread use of mind- and mood-altering substances.

In addition, several agencies in American society redefined their roles in relation to public education during the last 25 years. Federal regulations concerning vocational and technical education, handicapped students, adult basic skills programs, desegregation, educational media, disadvantaged students, and bilingual education increased from 92 in 1965 to nearly 1000 in 1977. Federal projects, programs, and pilot studies were instituted. Court decisions on education rose from 112 in 1956, to 729 in 1966, to more than 1200 in 1970. Statutes and court rulings undercut administrative authority. Decisions that had once been made in the principal's office were made at the judge's bench. Special interest groups instigated much of this increased governmental attention to redress perceived unresponsiveness and red tape, and because federal governmental agencies could be more easily influenced than local boards of education. Special-interest groups learned the process of bypassing school boards, both local and state.

But perhaps the greatest single cause for the recent revolution in education was the evolution of progressive education. The first wave of progressive education reflected a larger humanitarian effort to help Americans adjust to the new urban-industrial society which emerged in the latter part of the 19th century. But the "life adjustment" phase of progressive education which followed World War II was marked by an increased emphasis on non-academic education. Even though the moves away from traditional education were strongly criticized through the years, critics were ignored, and the ascendency of progressive education continued. The most recent manifestation of this philosophy occurred in the 1960s when social concerns brought another wave of educational responses: team teaching, student contracts, "hands on" learning, a "relevant" curriculum, teachers as facilitators, student rights, anecdotal reporting. Curriculum changes included "new math," social studies instead of history, and the replacement to a large extent of classic literature and finished compositions with contemporary works and group discussion. Also, curriculum choice was greatly expanded. In some schools the only core requirements for graduation were physical education, health, American history, and government.

Organizational changes included open classrooms, individualized instruction, free schools, semester and mini courses, and the discontinuation of ability grouping. Behavioral standards were relaxed and homework minimized. At the same time grade inflation and social promotion resulted in a general lack of discipline and respect for learning.

The lowering of standards hid problems. Eventually though, by the 1970s, when remedial English courses had become necessary for half the entering freshman class of some colleges, unprepared college freshmen and illiterate high school graduates were becoming obvious. Less obvious were students and adults who lacked self-discipline, respect for society, positive attitudes and values, a sense of personal accomplishment, and the skills to achieve in the competitive world beyond the school room. All were results—victims—of a system that, in trying to be all things to all people, failed considerably with many who had the potential to achieve much more.

For before students can practice effective thinking that is so necessary in a democracy, they need command of the essential tools. They must be able to read with comprehension; they must be able to put complex ideas into intelligible prose; they must have some command of mathematical thinking; and finally, they must have a store of reliable information to draw upon. They are much more likely to acquire these essential tools if they have a positive attitude toward learning. This attitude can be fostered, as it once was, through teaching moral and character education and the work ethic. Such instruction has been abandoned even though polls show that parents favor it, and what little research there is in this area shows that it helps to prevent discipline problems.

What has happened to the system? How could a country so committed to providing education to all its citizens be failing to do so? Where are the controls?

The main control used to be the parents who supported the schools through parent-teacher organizations and local school boards. However, for a variety of reasons, parents are no longer involved with the schools as they once were. Moreover, the consolidation of schools resulted in larger school districts with one-eighth the number of lay school board members elected by the parents nationally.

The education establishment became more powerful, for even the most committed board members were rarely a match for professional administrators and unionized teachers. Teacher unions became skilled advocates for their constituents, putting teachers in a direct adversarial relationship with school boards, and dissipating the authority of school administrators. Yet at the same time that professional educators and unions were gaining power, academic achievement was declining.

Can we hold the schools responsible for that decline? Given the fact that professional educators determined programs, that teachers retained control over what was taught and how, and that the schools instigated the educational changes that proved to be so detrimental, the answer is yes. Even though this period saw substantial social upheaval, research and historical precedent show that school-controlled efforts can succeed despite such deterrents. A review of public school achievement, including SAT and other test scores, supports this position.

Undoubtedly, much of what happened was motivated by the desire to help low-achieving students. While we certainly need to do all that we can, within reason, to assist low-ability students, we need also to accept the fact that equal opportunity does not guarantee equal results. We must once again challenge students of every ability level through consistent expectations and improved standards.

In the words of James Lynch and Bertrand Evans:

> . . . certain prevalent but nonsensical equations . . . should be abolished: namely, that what is great is difficult; that what is difficult is uninteresting; that what is uninteresting is unteachable. Neither editors nor teachers should be afraid of giving students "what is good for them." If students knew what was good for them, they would need neither teachers nor textbooks. The vapid theories that advocate teaching the "whole child," removing all difficulties from his path, and being permissive at every turn cannot be allowed to put in jeopardy the literacy of a whole nation.*

Suggested Solutions to the Problem

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Improve the teaching of reading.
2. More strictly evaluate educational materials, and re-examine the selection process. Materials should be sufficiently challenging to students.
3. Upgrade curricula.
4. While continuing the emphasis on basic skills, the curricula must include the teaching of higher-order skills.
5. Examine use of student time—of time required for assignments in light of what is learned as well as the structure of the school day, (i.e., time on task).
6. The time and expense required for individualized instruction — a growing trend — should be carefully analyzed in order to determine whether this method is an effective use of instructional time and the educational dollar.
7. Evaluate the results of pre-school education to determine whether the gains are sustainable and how the programs should be funded.
8. The kindergarten year should have increased academic content.
9. Meaningful homework should be consistently assigned beginning in the early years of school. It should be systematically collected, and checked, and should determine to some extent — however small — what a student's grade in any given course will be.
10. The value of work, good study habits, a positive attitude, an appreciation of learning, self-discipline, and ethical behavior should be incorporated into the curricula, especially in the early years of school.
11. Re-establish the school's authority to demand and maintain discipline.
12. Require pre-kindergarten screening procedures to identify special strengths and needs, especially deterrents to reading ability, and provide assistance when necessary. Children who enter school with advanced skills should not be allowed to stagnate while others catch up.
13. Comprehensive testing programs should be instituted to monitor student achievement, especially in relation to student potential. Remediation or intervention, particularly in the early years, must be available for those who need it.
14. Tests that include accurate identification of underachievers should be administered, and the results effectively utilized.
15. Students should not move through the grades without mastering the necessary skills. The mastery learning programs currently in use should be carefully evaluated since there is not a consensus concerning their effectiveness in providing basic skills instruction.
16. Parents should have candid and thorough reports of their children's academic progress — reports which are based not only on how students are achieving according to the demands of the curriculum, but how they are achieving in comparison to their peers. Otherwise, parents will not have a realistic assessment of their children's progress.
17. Re-establish credibility in the measurement of academic progress.

---

*Bertrand Evans and James Lynch, *High School English Textbooks* (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1963).

18. Encourage and honor young scholars and artists as much as we do young athletes; give scholarships to top ACT and SAT scorers.
19. State departments of education should compile a list of all competitions, scholarships, grants, and contests and disseminate it to local school districts.
20. Our nation would be better served were greater effort given to meeting the needs of gifted and academically talented students.

The Teaching Profession

21. State boards of education should accept the responsibility for upgrading standards for teacher certification and accreditation. They should be aware of how teachers are trained to teach reading and review the results of this training.
22. Greater flexibility is needed to allow graduates with demonstrated knowledge in their fields, but without the required hours in education courses, to teach other than basic skills.
23. Separate certification should be established for middle-school teachers to include required training in the problems of early adolescence.
24. Improve the screening of teacher candidates.
25. In-service programs should be structured around the needs of individual districts. Training in the teaching of higher-order skills is one area of need.
26. Compensation should be based on the teacher's ability to teach, as well as on years of schooling. Other incentives for retaining teachers should be instituted. Automatic salary increases should be abolished.
27. The issue of tenure should be more thoroughly discussed. Perhaps it would not be necessary if due process were incorporated into the dismissal procedure and both teachers and administrators were given clearly articulated, performance-related criteria against which they would be evaluated.
28. Decisions determining the appropriate subjects for, as well as the timing and duration of, negotiations between teacher unions and local boards should be open to the public. The total percentage of salary increase—including fringe benefits and increments—should be published as well as top salaries, instead of only beginning salaries. The cost of negotiating, itself, should be closely monitored.
29. The negotiation process must be shortened to make it less disruptive.
30. The effect of teacher unions on education should be thoroughly studied and reported.

Local Administration

31. Administrators and principals need better training and in-service programs, especially in the areas of evaluating personnel and developing in-service programs for staff.
32. Principals should establish themselves as educational leaders and give more attention to the curriculum.
33. Administrators' pay should be based on merit.
34. Apprenticeship programs and in-service training should be provided to school board members.
35. School board associations should help their members understand how to govern their districts effectively, and require accountability to the voters for student achievement.
36. The impact of the federal role in education on local school governance should be thoughtfully reviewed.
37. More effort should be made to identify and remove barriers to the reforms that would make the public school system more responsive and accountable.
38. Local school boards need more authority to govern their districts effectively.
39. School boards should represent parents more forcefully in decisions affecting student performance, including amount of homework, difficulty of materials, report card format, length of the school day, and requirements for graduation.
40. School boards should publicize clearly articulated policies and short- and long-range goals. They should base their evaluations of superintendents on how well their policies are implemented and their goals are achieved.
41. The policies and goals of the district school board should be reflected in the curriculum.
42. State legislatures should review and simplify their education codes.

Research

43. Evaluate the process of commissioning educational research and determine whether or not the federal government should be involved.
44. Valid research is needed in many areas, such as what motivates children to learn, how children learn, and the impact of drug use on the ability to learn.
45. The relationship between the economy and the literacy level of the populace must be clarified. Will increased literacy improve the economy? Would more people be productively employed if job requirements were not inflated, requiring degrees and levels of literacy unnecessary to the tasks?
46. Broader dissemination of good, workable ideas is needed; the National Diffusion Network could be expanded.
47. Funding should be provided for the dissemination of research findings to classroom teachers, administrators, and school board members.
48. School leaders should study the research on the "effective school" movement and emulate its successes.

The System and Structure of Education

49. National standards should be determined for certain skill levels — especially reading, writing, and math. Regardless of what tests are used, each school should report the degree to which students are meeting those national standards so that parents and teachers will be able to put student achievement into perspective. Since it is the only instrument currently readily available nationwide, perhaps all graduating seniors should take the GED test in order to provide national assessment data.
50. State standards for evaluating schools and school districts should be reviewed and, if necessary, improved.
51. Pilot projects should be implemented that allow children to begin school when they are deemed ready, regardless of chronological age, in

order to determine whether students learn more under such circumstances, and whether later social problems are decreased by such a system.

52. More public discussion about the purpose and performance of the public schools is needed. Parents must have a larger role in the decision-making process, especially in reaching a consensus about what should be taught. This could be accomplished through a parent council in each school.
53. Competition in the educational marketplace, by use of vouchers and tuition tax credits that would be fair to those of all income levels should be objectively and unemotionally evaluated. If found to improve schooling, they should be encouraged.
54. The reasons for and results of student drop-outs need more comprehensive study, and more attention. Allowing students to enter adult basic education classes at younger ages may be one solution.
55. Alternatives to compulsory education, such as apprenticeships, should be examined.
56. Drop-outs should be allowed to return to finish school at any time, free of charge. Everyone should be entitled to complete the equivalent of 13 years of free schooling (kindergarten through 12th grade).
57. The determination of future work-force needs and the skills that will be required for employment, necessitate closer cooperation between business and education.
58. Employers' emphasis on the diploma for entry into the job market should be accompanied by equal emphasis on the academic skills necessary for successful employment.
59. There should be more communication between business and education. Teachers should incorporate understanding of the needs of the work force into their lessons.

National Attitudes Toward Education

60. In order for schools to become accountable for student achievement, several factors must be identified: what changes are needed, who should make them, any barriers to making the changes and the removal of such barriers.
61. The public needs to become more aware of and involved in the educational system, and to make its opinions known to elected representatives.
62. The President and the Secretary of Education should continue to focus national attention on the status of education in America.
63. Lawmakers, educators, and others must resist the temptation to apply quick fixes and must not succumb to excessive pressure from special interest groups; instead, short- and long-range planning to improve education for all is needed.
64. A presidential task force should be appointed to study the expenditure of federal education funds and school tax dollars to determine: (a) why many consider educational funding insufficient, even though funding has increased while enrollment has declined; (b) what areas are underfunded or overfunded; and (c) whether any savings can be realized.
65. Decision-makers within the commercial television industry must weigh carefully the short- and long-range ramifications of programming on the values and behavior of young people. They especially need to distinguish clearly between the portrayal of adult and youthful behavior and depict more young people who work hard and excel. A national study of the effects of television on youth should be conducted.

Illiteracy

66. It is respectfully recommended that the President or the Congress appoint a national task force to determine how reading is being taught, how reading should be taught, and how reading teachers are trained.
67. The discussion of how to teach reading should be expanded beyond the domain of educators to include the public.
68. National definitions of the various levels of literacy must be established and better data-gathering procedures instituted. More accurate estimates would enable legislators to better determine: (a) how many of those eligible for adult basic education would refuse and how many would benefit from training; and (b) considering the return on the investment, whether we are spending enough on local, state, and national levels to combat adult illiteracy.
69. The military's research on illiteracy should be studied and relevant findings incorporated into current public education programs.
70. Attention should be given to illiterate adults on welfare. The possibility of requiring them to take advantage of educational opportunities in order to remove themselves from the welfare rolls should be considered.
71. Consideration could be given to shortening prison sentences somewhat for illiterate inmates who successfully complete reading programs.

Conclusion

Solutions to recent educational problems are possible, but we must understand that there will be opposition to real reform. Given the strength of the educational bureaucracy and the shortness of the national attention span, we may well be not only a nation at risk, but a nation at a loss about how to minimize the risk. Perhaps we do not lack the means, but rather the will to do what we should. We must continue our newly found vigilence. We must institute measures of accountability that include a record of student progress and an analysis of cost effectiveness. We must scrutinize our entire educational delivery system and focus on *learner outcomes* in order to determine what increases or decreases achievement. We must also identify the barriers to educational progress and remove them.

INTRODUCTION

The National Advisory Council on Adult Education (NACAE), a presidentially appointed body established by Congress in 1970, is charged with developing recommendations on adult basic education for the President, the Congress, and the Department of Education. This Council, therefore, is very interested in knowing the extent of adult illiteracy, the cause of this problem, and what can be done to prevent it.

Despite the lack of supporting data, and although estimates on the number of illiterate adults in this country vary significantly and reflect both the definition chosen as well as the perspective of those defining the term, general agreement exists that there is a substantial number of adults who are unable to read, write, or compute at the level needed to function in today's society. This figure stands to be increased by approximately one million young Americans who drop out of school annually, by the thousands who graduate from secondary schools but are still illiterate, and by the many immigrants who, regardless of their literacy in their native languages, are not literate in English.

This Council has heard repeatedly that the majority of the unemployed and the incarcerated are illiterate, as are a substantial percentage of those who receive social assistance. Other measures of the impact of illiteracy on society are personal: parents who cannot read to their children, drivers who cannot read street signs, patients who cannot read medical instructions, shoppers who cannot read grocery store prices, and voters who cannot read the names on ballots.

Given the Council's charge and the growing concern about illiteracy in this country, the Council appointed a committee to study the varying estimates of illiteracy, to examine the role our educational system plays in illiteracy, and to develop recommendations to reduce or prevent illiteracy in the future. The focus of this report, then, is preventive in nature rather than remedial, for significant, if not sufficient, efforts are being made to address existing illiteracy. The Council applauds the programs to remediate adult illiterates and strongly encourages their continued support, while at the same time hoping that one day such programs will no longer be necessary.

Since adult illiteracy results to a large extent from a failure in the educational process, this report will focus on the institution established to foster a literate citizenry, the public school system. As it is virtually impossible to isolate a discussion of the attainment of literacy from an assessment of the overall functioning of the educational system, a broad approach has been taken in order to examine the system's many facets.

In addition to explaining why there is confusion about the extent of adult illiteracy in this country, this report attempts to: clarify problems that exist within the educational process; establish a definite causal relationship between the problems outlined and adult illiteracy; complement and reinforce many of the recommendations made in previously published reports, and focus the current reform efforts more clearly on the acquisition of literacy.

THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Conflicting Definitions Create Conflicting Estimates

Adult Illiteracy

Who is illiterate? How many illiterate adults are in America? Is the number growing? In his paper prepared for the 1978 National Right to Read Conference, Thomas Sticht says:

> It seems clear, to me, that the way in which we conceptualize the nature of literacy, and its relationship to the basic skills and to knowledge content areas, will determine the types of research programs we pursue to contribute to the solution of literacy problems. For this reason we need to have as clear a conceptualization of literacy as we can, one which will reflect the inherent nature of literacy as a human capacity for acquiring and using knowledge.[239]

We must have a clear concept of literacy, then, in order to solve the literacy problem. We must also clearly define illiteracy in order to estimate accurately the extent of the problem so that it can be addressed effectively. Yet, as Carmen St. John Hunter and David Harman remind us,

> There is still no uniformly accepted definition of the rudimentary characteristics of adult illiteracy . . . [and] . . . external standards for quantifying literacy or classifying persons in relation to it do not exist.[133]

Definitions

The range of definitions is obvious from the following examples:

- The 1981 UNESCO report defines a literate person as one who can both read and write a short, simple statement about his or her everyday life.
- The United Nations declares a person literate who can read and understand a simple, common paragraph.[24]
- The National Health Survey defines literacy as reading ability comparable to that of the average school child entering the 4th grade.[91]
- The Census Bureau uses the number of years of schooling completed as the criterion for determining literacy. In the 1950s, it determined that anyone with less than a 5th-grade education was illiterate. In the 1960s, the Census Bureau set completion of the 6th grade as a determinant of literacy.
- The U.S. Department of Education currently defines literacy in terms of the completion of eight years of formal schooling but does not elaborate or qualify the quality of schooling or achievement test results.[140]

Estimates

Based on the first two definitions, estimates of illiteracy in this country range from 2.4 to 5 percent.[24] According to the National Health Survey definition, the third definition, five percent of youth 12- to 17-years old are illiterate.[91] If, as four of these definitions say, the highest grade completed relates to literacy, then there should be a reduction in the number of illiterates, as Americans are completing more years of school than ever before. Only 6.7 percent of all 14- to 17-year-olds were enrolled in school in 1889-90, but 95.7 percent were enrolled by 1980. By 1970 only 5.4 percent of persons 25 years and older had less than five years of schooling, and that percentage decreased to 3.3 in 1960.[240] Between 1970 and 1980, the percentage of those over 25 with less than eight years of schooling decreased from 28.3 to 18.4 percent.[262] However, Hunter and Harman point out the fallacies of relating literacy to grade completion.

> The available school-leaving statistics do not necessarily correlate with individuals' abilities to function or even to read. Indeed, they may reflect little more than increased age requirements for school attendance.[133]

I. Kirsch and J. Guthrie's 1977-78 study concluded that reading scores of 8th graders in Chicago ranged from an average grade level of 4.4 in the lowest school to a median level of 10.5 in the best school.[91] A two-year study recently completed in Kentucky by Sharon Darling shows that of the adult students registering for adult basic education, the median grade completed in school was 8.6, but the median reading level at the time of the study was 2.0.[54]

Other studies agree that grade-level achievement does not necessarily indicate reading level. A 1979 report of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science estimates that one out of every five high school seniors is unable to carry out everyday reading tasks.[147] A 1980 report by the Commission of Humanities, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and chaired by Richard Lyman, President Emeritus of Stanford University, states that the rate of illiteracy of high school seniors has been estimated at between 10 and 20 percent.[149] However, Donald Fisher, in a National Institute of Education commissioned study, "Functional Literacy and the Schools," concludes that less than one percent of graduates are functionally illiterate, and that the illiteracy rate among 12- to 17-year-olds has remained at approximately five percent over the years,[91] even though the rate of school attendance has increased enormously.

Confusion also results from the varying levels of reading mastery used as standards by the general public. Some relate to the inability of students to pass minimum competency tests, whereas others relate to students who have learned to read and write but who have not attained higher order comprehension skills and cannot write complex sentences.

Functional Illiteracy

"Functional illiteracy" is a relatively new concept that has compounded the confusion by introducing the dimension of *function*. Further, "functional illiteracy" has attracted the same multiplicity of definitions that plagues efforts to define mere "illiteracy," resulting in the same inability to plot growth or shrinkage in the population. Writing in the *Harvard Educational Review*, Kenneth Levine scrutinizes the concept of functional literacy from which "functional illiteracy" obviously derives:

> Adult basic education has been profoundly influenced since World War II by the concept of functional literacy. Behind its superficial appeal, however, lies a tangle of flawed assumptions and ambiguities.
>
> For more than two decades, worldwide efforts at eradicating adult illiteracy have been deeply influenced by and increasingly extended under the rubric of functional literacy. . . . The term is now used to justify everything and anything connected with basic skills education for adults.
>
> The heart of the case to be mounted against current notions of functional literacy is that they obscure the identification of appropriate targets, goals, and standards of achievement in the education of adults by promising, though failing to produce, a quantitatively precise, unitary standard of "survival" literacy. Further, these varying conceptions of functional literacy encourage the idea that relatively low levels of individual achievement—low in relation to the demands of typical literacy-mediated activities—will directly result in a set of universally desired outcomes, such as employment, personal and economic growth, job advancement, and social integration.[157]

The notion of a level of literacy above the mere capacity to read a simple message, but less than full fluency, apparently originated in the dissatisfaction of some World War II commanders with the inability of their troops to interpret written instructions. Consequently, an attempt was made to describe the dimensions of the "literacy problem" in objective, quantifiable terms related to functional "life skills" rather than to school-oriented content.[133]

According to Hunter and Harman,

> A new direction originated in 1970 from the Conference on Strategies for Generating a Nationwide Adult Right-to-Read Effort. The challenge was "to foster, through every means, the ability to read, write, and compute with functional competence needed for meeting the requirements of adult living." (Report of the North Carolina Conference, 1970)[133]

Using this definition, the Division of Adult Education of the U.S. Office of Education sponsored a study to identify the competencies needed by adult Americans. This study provided another measurement of functional literacy

> . . . the widely known Adult Performance Level (APL) study, conducted for the United States Office of Education, and which is now serving as the basis for functional literacy assessment in some states, conceived of literacy as "composed of an application of communication (reading, writing, speaking, listening), computation, problem solving, and interpersonal relations skills to knowledge of occupations, consumer economics, community resources, government and law, and health"! . . . In this case literacy is not restricted to the traditional skills of reading and writing, but is extended to include oral language skills and even interpersonal skills![239]

The APL defined some sixty-five requirements for adult living and measured adult success by income, job status, and education. The study established three levels:

- Level 1 — adults who are functionally incompetent;
- Level 2 — adults who function but are not proficient; and
- Level 3 — adults who are competent.

Not surprisingly, the APL study also gave us new statistics: 19 percent of Americans are functionally illiterate (Level 1), and 33.9 percent function only at a level of minimal competency (Level 2).[6]

The International Reading Association (IRA) and others take strong exception to the findings of this project, citing critics who question the validity of the study because the test items were based on economic and educational success, and that by using those criteria,

> . . . a significant portion of the population will always fall into the ranges of functionally incompetent or marginally competent. More specifically, the "functional illiterates" were preselected on the basis of income, education and occupation. This questionable procedure raises serious doubts about the popular conclusion which has been drawn from the report.[15]

The IRA argues that if there were as many functional illiterates in this country as this study claims, every one of the 47 million adults who had not completed high school at that time, plus an additional 13 million people with high school or college diplomas would not be capable of functioning in society.

Because the APL findings have so changed the concept of illiteracy, we believe it necessary to point out that the APL study has been criticized for:

- its underlying logic;
- the idea that it measures success instead of, or as well as survival;
- the quality and validity of the APL test items.

A report of the National Institute of Education, *APL Revisited: Its Uses and Adaption in States*, says that, "The much publicized finding that 20 percent of American adults are 'functionally incompetent' on the basis of the design, conduct and reporting of the APL study is altogether untenable."[6] In addition, the authors point out that the USOE deemed the APL study an approved project in "Educational Programs That Work" even though, unlike every other project so approved, the study did not constitute an educational program. The authors contend that the U.S. Department of Education made the APL implementation a national priority long before the study's final report was completed and that:

> . . . this priority gave Federal sanction not only to the general notion of organizing adult education so as to meet the life and occupational needs of adults with low levels of formal schooling, but to one particular manifestation of this general notion, namely, the APL approach.[6]

(For a more complete review of the APL study, the reader is referred to the works of Ronald Cervero and William Griffith listed in the bibliography.)

In 1970 the Division of Adult Education of the U.S. Department of Education adopted as its definition of adult literacy: ". . . the ability to read, write and compute with the functional competence needed for meeting the requirements of adult living." A committee of experts for UNESCO also developed a definition for functional literacy:

> An individual must be able to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also to enable him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the country's development.[105]

Thus, at least, the reasons for the varying estimates became clearer: two different *types* of illiteracy — *basic* and *functional*—are being discussed, with many people using the terms interchangeably. In addition, there is a lack of clarity about what constitutes either of the two types, with many different things complicating estimates.

Illiteracy and the Economy

Business and Industrial Needs

One of the sharpest spurs to the increased interest in illiteracy, which adds to the complexity of its definition, is the effect illiteracy is perceived to have on economic productivity and unemployment. Much of the clamor about illiteracy follows employers' angry disclosures that their employees do not have the basic literacy skills necessary to do their jobs. The New York-based Center for Public Resources (CPR) found that three-quarters of 184 corporations responding to a 1981 survey said that employee errors in reading, writing, and math had forced their companies to establish basic skills programs. In establishing a program to aid employees who had inadequate English skills, Aetna Life and Casualty Company of Hartford, Connecticut, found they needed courses at eight levels to meet the diverse needs of their workers. A CPR vice president who authored their study estimates that the nationwide price tag for such efforts exceeds $10 billion.

Unemployment and Productivity Concerns

While illiteracy has an impact, it must be kept in mind that various other factors contribute to low productivity and unemployment, as examples: plant efficiency, labor/management agreements, and employee morale. Unemployment is seasonal and regional. It is affected by the amount of available capital per worker and the number of people entering the labor force. The labor force grew by 7.4 million people (11.9 percent) in the 1950s, by 13 million (18.8 percent) in the 1960s, and by 22 million (33.6 percent) in the 1970s. The 19 million new jobs created in the 1970s were not sufficient to employ everyone.[38] In fact, the United States has always had a surplus of workers except during wartime.[76]

Legislation also affects unemployment. Many feel that the law mandating a minimum wage is most detrimental to those with the least education; one expert estimates that youth unemployment would have been 3.8 percent lower in recent years without it.[47]

Obviously, by itself literacy does not automatically lead to a better life or an improved national economy. Hunter and Harman warn us that these expectations have seriously affected attitudes toward literacy and toward clearly articulated literacy goals. They take exception to:

- The assertion that economic development, increased gross national product, and modernization automatically follow or are contingent upon literacy.
- The parallel claim that *anyone* who becomes literate is automatically better off economically, is better able to find employment, and becomes a better citizen.
- The claim, even after narrow economic goals were decried as too utilitarian and limiting, that literacy might somehow bring about national development in the broadest sense of the term.

They say that

> These oversimplified assumptions about literacy have given rise to a long series of unsuccessful literacy campaigns. Promoters of literacy so zealously state some of these claims that they raised hopes that have never been fulfilled. Any challenge was heard as denial of the value of literacy.[133]

The Credentialing Factor

Another factor that directly concerns the unemployed and affects our perceptions about illiteracy is employer demand for higher levels of education and more credentials than are necessary to do a job. In 1977, sociologist Randall Collins pointed out

> . . . that in the nineteenth century those at the bottom of the American social and economic heap were led to believe that if they were literate more opportunities would be available to them. As the number of those with educational credentials increased, however, so did the basic requirements for the same level of jobs.[133]

Peter Drucker substantiates this observation, noting that in this century educational credentials for many jobs have escalated without any real change in job requirements—where applicants once needed a high school diploma, they now need a college degree.[62]

Still we read that more schooling and more degrees correspond with higher lifetime income. Roger Freeman tries to debunk the implied causality by saying that, most likely, "both the length of schooling and the level of income reflect the intelligence, persistence, and personal drive of the individual."[100] He also points out that the ratio between earnings of high school and college graduates has narrowed from 1:1.50 in 1967 to 1:1.35 in 1978. He hypothesizes that this narrowing could result from the decline in knowledge and occupational skills of college graduates, reflecting lowered admission and graduation standards, or from the fact that the supply of college graduates has increased faster than college-level job openings have.[100]

Kenneth Edwards tells us that

> . . . between 1970 and 1976, the proportion of American workers with four or more years of college education increased by more than 60 percent in clerical, sales, service and blue-collar occupations—areas that have traditionally employed very few college graduates . . . Only one in every nineteen jobs requires a baccalaureate degree, but the remaining eighteen jobs will need technical training, work experience, or training in a particular skill or a group of skills.[76]

Furthermore, the Department of Labor estimates that 75 percent of the unemployed lack the basic skills necessary to be trained for high-tech jobs. While unemployment hit a post-depression high of 10.7 percent, jobs in computer, business machine, and data processing firms have gone begging.[251] The real challenge is to provide the level of literacy needed to function properly, without over-qualifying, over-credentialing, and over-training employees.

The Change to a Technological/ Information Society

The perception is that we have not produced literate people for an industrial society, and that as a consequence we will not be able to produce the even more literate people needed for a technological/information society.

Jeanne Chall points out that one of the main reasons for the confusion over the extent of adult illiteracy in the United States is the vastly changing nature of the adult student. "Some still seek help with basic literacy. But this group is shrinking in comparison with those whose literacy needs go beyond the beginning."[45]

Roger Thompson reminds us that literacy is not a static concept. A frontiersman who could write his name was considered literate, but the emerging computer age will require "higher-order" skills, critical thinking, and problem solving. He maintains that the schools are "losing ground in the struggle to keep education abreast of the times."[251]

Economist Anthony Carnevale states that although the current emphasis on high-tech is somewhat overdone—as high-tech production will, at best, employ 10 percent of the American workforce in the foreseeable future. What is needed to fully realize the potential of the new technologies, he thinks, is a greater degree of technical literacy in the population as a whole.[38]

In *Megatrends*, John Naisbitt notes that we have moved into the information society. Farmers, who required little schooling and constituted more than one-third of the work-force at the turn of the century, now make up only 3 percent of the workforce. Information occupations have increased from 17 to 60 percent since 1950; by 1967, 46 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) was accounted for by the information sector, including more than 53 percent of the income earned. Naisbitt also says:

> In this literacy-intensive society, when we need basic reading and writing skills more than ever before, our education system is turning out an increasingly inferior product.[177]

Drucker agrees and observes that, in the last hundred years, we have enjoyed a fantastic increase in productivity, but that it was brought on by higher capital investment, better machines and tools, and most of all, by better management. Drucker further maintains that because highly unionized blue-collar jobs required practically no skills, the public schools have not been pressured to perform in recent years as they were 75 years ago, when education was the only way out of poverty and the only chance for success.[63]

Drucker predicts that our educational system will improve in response to renewed pressure when the public perceives that future productivity, which determines the level of real income, will depend on the skills employees bring to the new information occupations.[63]

Other Compounding Factors

The Impact of the Military

Literacy skills are extremely important in the military because military personnel engage in far more reading tasks than do their civilian counterparts. Sticht found that military personnel read two hours a day—almost twice as much as civilian workers.[65]

Approximately 250,000 individuals (selected from a much larger group of applicants), enter the Armed

Forces each year. The *range* of literacy levels among enlistees is roughly representative of that among high school graduates, but the enlistees' *average* literacy level is slightly lower—8.6 for enlistees, compared to a national average of 9.6. Approximately 40 percent read below the 9th-grade level; 6 percent read below a 7th-grade level. There are reports of multi-million dollar losses in equipment due to their operator's failure to either read or comprehend technical instructions. In 1980, over 210,000 military personnel enrolled in 59 million instructional hours of reading-oriented basic skills courses at a cost in excess of $70 million.

The Army introduced the first massive paper-and-pencil intelligence-testing program in the United States in 1918. Its results gave the first indication of a literacy problem: 30 percent of 1.7 million men could not read the test form well enough to understand it. Yet in 1980, a period of documented achievement decline, a comparison of the scores earned by young men on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) with those earned by men serving during World War II showed that 40 percent of the 1980 group and 36 percent of the World War II group were in the two highest categories. There was no appreciable difference between the proportions of 1980 and World War II populations that scored in the lowest categories. The median AFQT percentile score for the 1980 group was 54; it was 50 for the World War II group.[8]

In recent years, several things have increased the military's concern about literacy. With the move to an all-volunteer force, the quality of personnel entering the service was greatly reduced: the percentage of Army recruits in the lowest ability category, Category IV, increased from 10 in 1975 to 31 in 1981 (and the situation might have been worse, had it not been for the unavailability of civilian jobs.) Furthermore, not only will the number of people in the 17-19-year-old age bracket, the primary access pool of the military, decline significantly over the next 10 years, but if recent trends continue the quality of that pool—high school graduates—will continue to decline as well.[63]

One last factor in the military's position on literacy was the General Accounting Office's (GAO) 1977 review of military literacy training programs. It found that they took a general approach to instruction, that is, one in which the participant would be taught to read the newspaper as well as the job manual. The GAO recommended to Congress that the content of the military's literacy training programs be made job-relevant or functional, which implicitly strengthened the concept of functional illiteracy.

The Impact of Refugees and Immigrants

Another element complicating any attempt to quantify the extent of illiteracy (whatever the definition) in America is the number of illegal aliens in the country. The Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated that at least 850,000 illegals entered the country in the late 1970s; other estimates range from 2 million to 20 million.[133] Among these people are undoubtedly some who are literate in their native language but not in English, others who are literate in both, and still others who are illiterate in both. There is no way of knowing how many fall into which category.

Cultural Literacy

As E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Richard Anderson, and others have concluded, literacy in any meaningful sense requires a "cultural" literacy—having the necessary background information to read general materials with understanding. It is not a matter of vocabulary or phonics or word recognition, but rather of the background knowledge that journalists and other writers tacitly assume the reader to have. Hirsch describes adult literacy as being less a system of skills than of information; it is what enables people to communicate without providing all the information to explain every reference. The problem is that the illiterate adult is not aware of what literate people are expected to know, and no one ever announces what that body of information is. Hirsch says:

> We all know that our continuing failure to achieve a high level of national literacy insures a continuing lack of subtlety in the communications that we can transmit widely in speeches, books and newspapers by means of the national language. Even a training manual, for instance, can be much more effective and functional if it can assume a readership that is culturally literate.[129]

Lack of Data

Probably the single greatest complicating factor in trying to determine the extent of illiteracy is the lack of effort made to collect valid data on the number of either basic or functional illiterates. Consequently, there is a dearth of statistics on which to base estimates. For example, Hunter and Harman tell us:

> The most widely available statistics come from the census, but the census-taker must rely on what people say about their educational attainment. Those who state that they have completed sixth grade are classified as literate. In the person-to-person sampling, individual census-takers may—or may not—ask those who have not completed sixth grade whether they can "read and write a simple message in any language," In both cases, however, the definitions are left to the census-taker and the respondent.[133]

The Inflation of Estimates

Although we have not found such motivation, Hunter and Harman include the possibility that some people may inflate the percentages of illiterates because they have a vested interest in drawing attention to the problem.

Summary

Conflicting perceptions of the nature of illiteracy; varying needs for literacy, which lead to conflicting definitions; and a lack of valid data mean that it is not possible to confirm the accuracy of any estimate of the number of illiterate adults in America. Before we can actually estimate the percentage of the populace that is illiterate, we need to agree on a definition of illiteracy. Perhaps we need to identify levels or types of illiterates. Especially, we must stop combining *basic* illiterates and functional illiterates in estimates and using these terms interchangeably.*

We must also develop some national system of monitoring literacy levels to determine whether progress is being made. It is in our best interest for everyone to know what is happening, but it is essential for those in charge of educational and funding decisions to know what needs exist and whether efforts to meet those needs are successful.

---

*The following groups of determining characteristics might be used to categorize types (and levels) of illiteracy.

- Refugees and immigrants who are not literate in English.
- High school graduates who are literate in some areas but not in others, and who can perform some skills but not others. This category could include those whose jobs in heavy industry are being phased out and who are now unable to make the transition to more technological work, and those termed "functionally" illiterate by the Adult Performance Level (APL) study.
- Adults who can read and write to some extent, but not well enough to find employment or to receive their General Educational Development (GED) Certificate of High School Equivalence. Also, high school graduates whose skills are deficient. (An adult could be defined as anyone over the age of 15 and not in school.)
- Adults who cannot read or write.
- Adolescents who are barely literate and may be dropping out of school.
- Students who are underachieving because they have not acquired complex reasoning and computing skills.
- Elementary school students who are not learning to read and write.

THE CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the lack of agreement on what illiteracy is and the lack of uniform data collection, there is agreement that the level of literacy attained by American youth has steadily declined in recent years. Incomplete though it is, the available information seems to substantiate this perception. But how can a country that spends more money on education than all other countries combined, and that keeps its young people in school longer than most other countries do, have experienced a decline in literacy?

The answer is complicated because the reasons are complex. It is true that factors such as poverty, lack of motivation, poor nutrition, and low educational levels of parents can inhibit learning. However, the fact remains that our educational system is responsible for teaching literacy and has always had to deal with such factors. But in order to put the efforts of the schools into perspective, and to better understand why we have the problem, we must consider the forces affecting their performance.

Some of these forces stem from historic conflicts; others are more recent. While some are external to the educational system, others are internal. All contribute to the low level of literacy and the consequent dissatisfaction of the American public with the product of the public school system.

We must examine the past to see what has brought us to our present condition. Diane Ravitch explains the need for this approach:

> To respond to criticism intelligently . . . educational policy makers need to know the history of which they are a part. They need to understand the aspirations, the values, and the traditions that have shaped American Education. They cannot have an adequate sense of the future without having an adequate sense of the past, nor can they judge what should be without knowing what has been.[202]

Introduction: A Historical Perspective

Before 1840 there was little difference between public and private education; public school parents often paid tuition, and private schools were often subsidized by states or localities. In proprietary schools, teachers instructed students for a price; they either satisfied their customers or went out of business. The methods of school governance and finance were extremely heterogeneous and "the typical attitude of the public toward education was . . . attend the school of your choice."[55]

Funds for public schools totaled only 47 percent of all educational expenditures in 1850. This increased to 79 percent by 1900, and except for the Catholic parochial schools, "the public schools had almost a monopoly on elementary education."[55] But, despite this virtual public monopoly on the delivery of educational services, there has never been general, *substantial* agreement on the goals of American public education.

From the beginning, different groups have wanted different results from schooling. In general, Easterners felt

> . . . the common school offered the most humane form of social control and the safest form of social renewal, [whereas frontier settlements] wished to create communities around the core institutions of school and church. . . The "system" was very loosely structured; what held it together at all was a general consensus on the importance of literacy and moral and civic instruction.[55]

Ironically, even though there has always been disagreement on what should be learned and how, the expansion of public schooling resulted in a reduction of educational choice. Whatever "education" is, the American public has given it generalized support and particularized dissent.[29]

Despite their differing beliefs about what education is or does, all the American people expect miracles:

> Probably no other idea has seemed more typically American than the belief that schooling could cure society's ills. Whether in the early nineteenth century or the late twentieth century, Americans have argued for more schooling on the grounds that it would preserve democracy, eliminate poverty, lower the crime rate, enrich the common culture, reduce unemployment, ease the assimilation of immigrants into the nation, overcome differences between ethnic groups, advance scientific and technological progress, prevent traffic accidents, raise health standards, refine moral character, and guide young people into useful occupations.[204]

In discussing the Head Start program, President Lyndon B. Johnson predicted that a single summer session would rescue children from poverty by enabling them to enter school on an even footing with their classmates.[204] With the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and the schools' increasing involvement in social reform, President Johnson said: "The answer for all our national problems comes down to a single word. That word is education."[228] Others also consider schools to be the prime instrument for achieving and maintaining a good society.[29] However, no consensus about what constitutes "the good society" has ever existed nor has any idea of how the schools might achieve it.

Long-held beliefs in the power of public schooling were severely shaken in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the much publicized finding of James Coleman and Christopher Jencks that schools really made no difference after all, that only socioeconomic status and I.Q. matter.[110, 204, 228] Even more recently, however, the effective school movement holds that schools can and do make a difference. James Koerner tells us that when students do well and the results are good, teachers and educators are the first to take credit, although they are the last to accept responsibility for poor results.[148]

Conflict

Because of a lack of consensus about what education is and what it can and should do, and because of limited educational choices, conflict exists. Contributing to the conflict "is the stubborn heterogeneity of the student population — their varying interests, levels of maturity, and capacities to learn."[29]

Many of these areas of conflict, which will be discussed in this report are:

- Training the intellect for disciplined thinking—education for its intrinsic worth as opposed to training for a career.
- Transmittal of the culture as opposed to revelance to today's world.
- Providing for students' current interests as opposed to preparing them to meet lifetime needs.
- Emphasis on the whole child as opposed to concentration on cognitive skills.
- Individual competition and achievement as opposed to group projects and cooperation.
- Ability grouping as opposed to heterogeneous classes.
- Increased resources for the poor and handicapped as opposed to help for the average and above-average student.
- Meeting the individual's needs as opposed to meeting society's needs.
- Development of self-discipline and the work ethic as opposed to an emphasis on the child's happiness and self-esteem.
- Self-contained classrooms as opposed to open classrooms.
- Group instruction as opposed to individualized instruction.
- Letter grades as opposed to anecdotal reporting.
- Establishing curriculum to which students must adjust as opposed to adjusting the curriculum to the students.
- Hands-on learning and the discovery method as opposed to rote memorization and lectures.
- Moral absolutes as opposed to situational ethics.
- Equality as opposed to excellence.
- School authority as opposed to individual student rights.
- Protection of the young as opposed to preparation for "the real world."
- Peer pressure as opposed to adult influence.
- Control:
  Lay as opposed to professional,
  Local as opposed to state and/or federal,
  Local as opposed to judicial,
  State as opposed to federal.
- Busing to achieve racial balance as opposed to neighborhood schools.
- Taxes exclusively for public schools as opposed to funding for private and parochial schools.
- The impact of schools on student learning as opposed to the effect of socioeconomic background.

Somehow many of these conflicts have been muted through compromise by accretion, that is, by simply adding another layer of curricula or of administrators. Additions are made to accommodate various interests, but seldom is anything removed from the structure. "This kind of incrementation has made it possible to avoid conflict by acquiescence."[258] In recent years, however, the traditional deterrents to the conflicts have not worked. There are limits to accretion. Furthermore, dissent has grown in both depth and breadth.

In addition to the historic conflicts, American schools have been affected by the meshing of several elements: an increasingly materialistic and permissive society, the turmoil resulting from the civil rights struggle, the ascendancy of liberal educators on the ever-swinging pendulum of educational thought, the increased power of teacher's unions, and the paradox of insisting on equality—egalitarianism in the classroom—while revering achievement. Our energies have been dissipated, our focus distorted, and our consensus—such as it was—diluted. We seem to have concentrated on everything but furthering cognitive skills and assuring literacy. We now see the effects of that lack of focused commitment.

According to University of Michigan psychologist Joseph Adelson:

> More than any other institution in American society . . . the schoolyard is the place where cultural traditionalism and modernism now struggle for the minds and hearts of the young. It is where values of merit, accomplishment, competition, and success; self-restraint, self-discipline, and the postponement of gratification; the stability of the family; and a belief in moral universals, collide with a modern ethos that scorns the pursuit of success; is egalitarian and redistributive in emphasis; tolerates or encourages sensual gratification; values self-expression as against self-restraint; accepts alternative or deviant forms of the family; and emphasizes ethical relativism.[228]

Influential Groups

Groups that have revolutionized education in the last 25 years are both *internal* and *external* to the public education system. *External groups* who influence educational decisions include politicians, courts, bureaucrats, and special interest groups, as well as other opinion makers. *Internal groups* include those within the "education establishment"—administrators, planners, researchers, foundations, and national organizations.[228] David Tyack believes that the latter groups "sought legitimacy through expertise rather than through . . . broad public participation."[258] Schools became increasingly insulated from lay participation. Professionals came to believe that only they should make educational decisions and that children should be freed from the provincialism of parents and local control.[258] Professionals:

> . . . ignored, savaged, or derided critics who urged schools to reward academic talent and accomplishment—in short, those who argued for educational quality.[228]

While certainly some good resulted from the educational changes these groups brought about, the question is: did students learn more? By 1977, the College Board's blue-ribbon panel found that less thoughtful and critical reading was demanded of and achieved by students, and that careful writing "has apparently about gone out of style." In response to growing public clamor, 38 state legislatures passed laws requiring minimum competency tests:

> At the end of a decade in which interest groups, the courts, and the federal government had said repeatedly through enactments, directives, and court orders that the schools, if left to themselves, could not be trusted to do the right thing, it was somehow fitting, though at the same time profoundly sad, that the state legislatures communicated to the schools that they could no longer be trusted to do the very thing that everyone assumed schools did first and best: the teaching of literacy.[204]

It is difficult to isolate the various elements that are now woven into the fabric of education in order to determine how each has contributed to the decline in literacy. Let us, however, examine some of these elements, recognizing that in some instances the relationship to the acquisition of literacy can be clearly seen, while in other instances the relationship may be more subtle, but just as important. The discussion of these elements centers on an examination of the changes resulting from three important shifts in American culture and education.

A Philosophical Shift: Traditional to Progressive

Much of what has happened in the name of education in recent years had its roots in a much earlier movement. Lawrence Cremin says that progressive education actually began as part of a larger humanitarian effort to apply the promises of American life to the urban-industrial civilization of the latter half of the 19th Century. Progressive education was a many-sided effort to use the schools to improve the lives of individuals.[52] Although it defies capsular definition this kind of education meant several things to progressives of that day:

> . . . broadening the program and function of the school to include direct concern for health, vocation, and the quality of family and community life . . . applying in the classroom the pedagogical principles derived from new scientific research in psychology and the social sciences . . . tailoring instruction more and more to the different kinds and classes of children who were being brought within the purview of the school . . . [proof] that culture could be democratized without being vulgarized . . .[52]

Perhaps the best way to describe the movement is by listing the features of traditional schooling that it rejected:

> . . . the belief that the primary purpose of the school was to improve intellectual functioning; emphasis on the cultural heritage and on learning derived from books; the teaching of the traditional subjects as such; the teaching of content dictated by the internal logic of the material; evaluation of the school program by tests of the mastery of subject matter; competition among students for grades and other extrinsic rewards; traditional policies of promotion and failure; reliance on textbooks; the use of rote memorization or drill as a teaching method; the domination of the classroom by the teacher . . .[204]

Ravitch explains that this "modern" education generally emphasized: active learning (experiences and projects) over passive learning (reading); cooperation among pupils on group projects; recognition of individual differences in students' abilities and interests; a curriculum dictated by the needs and interests of the students; the goal of "effective living" rather than acquisition of knowledge; and socialization to the group instead of individualism.[204]

The individual most identified with progressive education is John Dewey, whose critics will admit that "the progressive emphasis on humane consideration of the child's personality has tended to make classrooms happier places."[234] However, Dewey's insistence on child-centered schools was to include "a vigorous suspicion of 'bookish' learning,"[204] the rejection of "the concept of studying subjects in organized capsules, such as reading, spelling, and arithmetic,"[228] the idea that "no subject is intrinsically of any more value than any other subject," and the dogma that "the process of learning overshadows the content to be learned."[234] Ravitch describes the impact:

> Because Dewey's ideas were complex, they were more easily misunderstood than understood, and his disciples proved better at discrediting traditional methods and curricula than at constructing a pedagogically superior replacement.[204]

The movement supposedly died when the Progressive Education Association folded in 1955, but its similarities with educational trends in recent years are evident.

The "Life Adjustment" Philosophy and Its Critics

The "life adjustment" craze was another version of progressive education that surfaced after World War II. Again, the similarities with recent trends can be noted. "Life adjustment" education was foreshadowed by the National Education Association's (NEA) adoption of seven "Cardinal Principles," six of which could be considered anti-academic, and by the advent of compulsory education, which increased the mandatory number of years in school from 14 to 16, and therefore increased the number of students in high schools.[228] Many of these "new" students dropped out as soon as possible.

The catalyst for life adjustment education was Charles Prosser, who had begun his career as a lobbyist for vocational education, which he feared might become a dumping ground for these potential dropouts. At a conference sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education's Division of Vocational Education in 1945, he announced that (the unsubstantiated figure of) 60 percent of the students then in school could not benefit from either academic or vocational programs.[204, 228] Regional conferences subsequently agreed that not only the poor, retarded, immature, unmotivated, and culturally disadvantaged students (who presumably made up Prosser's sixty percent), but all students, should receive "life adjustment" education because it best met the needs of all American youth.[204] Prosser insisted "that every subject taught in high school must be judged by its utility for everyday living."[204] Examples of topics that appeared in school curricula included: "What Is Expected of a Boy on a Date?", "Developing an Effective Personality", and "Housing and Home Building." Students learned what kind of clothing was appropriate and what kind of nail polish to wear.[204]

> Radio repair was substituted for physics, and business English for Milton. Course topics such as "clicking with the crowd" and "personal grooming" joined—and occasionally replaced—composition and geometric proofs in modish high schools.[228]

The U.S. Office of Education threw its full support behind the campaign for life adjustment education.

> In 1947, John W. Studebaker, commissioner of education, appointed a National Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth, which included representatives from . . . [most of the major educational groups]. This commission sponsored conferences, and issued numerous publications through the Government Printing Office, and spurred the creation of state commissions on life adjustment education. A second national commission, appointed in 1950, continued the promotion of this concept until the commission's term ended in 1954.[204]

Progressive education had been criticized since 1930, but the criticisms were virtually ignored. For example, William Bagley, founder of the Essentialists, believed such theories were producing a weak-minded civilization. He felt that informal learning should be only supplementary to the "essentials' [that] were the most likely to produce the literate and orderly electorate any democratic polity required."[228] Boyd Bode, while not a critic of progressive education, rejected child-centered learning:

> It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the purpose of sound education is precisely to emancipate the pupil from the dependence on immediate interest.[228]

Walter Lippman in 1940 gave his reasons for rejecting such education:

> Modern education . . . abandons and neglects as no longer necessary the study of the whole classical heritage of the great works of great men.
>
> Thus there is an enormous vacuum . . . and with what is that vacuum filled: it is filled with the elective, eclectic, the specialized, the accidental, and incidental improvisations and spontaneous curiosities of teachers and students. There is no common faith, no common body of principle, no common body of knowledge, no common moral and intellectual discipline. Yet the graduates of these modern schools are expected to form a civilized community. They are expected to have social conscience.
>
> . . . what enables men to know more than their ancestors is that they start with a knowledge of what their ancestors have already learned. They are able to do advanced experiments which increase knowledge because they do not have to repeat the elementary experiments. It is tradition which brings them to the point where advanced experimentation is possible. . . . This is why a society can be progressive only if it conserves its tradition.
>
> The notion that every problem can be studied as such with an open and empty mind, without preconception, without knowing what has already been learned about it, must condemn men to a chronic childishness. For no man, and no generation of men, is capable of inventing for itself the arts and sciences of a high civilization.[159]

John Dewey himself criticized schools that

> . . . tend to make little or nothing of organized subject-matter of study; to proceed as if any form of direction or guidance by adults were an invasion of individual freedom.[228]

Whereas the critics of the earlier "progressive" education could only point to random examples, the new "life adjustment" adaptation was in use throughout the country, supported by the U.S. Office of Education and nearly every major education group. It made a much better target, and

> . . . it [also] contained an abundance of slogans, jargon, and vacuous anti-intellectualism; it carried the utilitarianism and group conformism of latter-day progressivism to its ultimate trivialization.[204]

A deluge of attacks on progressive education followed. Numerous articles appeared in popular magazines, as well as educational journals:

> *Time*, for example, characterized life adjustment education as the latest gimmick among U. S. educators and defined it contemptuously as a school of thought which seemed to believe that the teacher's job was not so much to teach history or algebra as to prepare students to live happily ever after.[204]

Progressive educators had been able to squelch their critics in the 1920s and 1930s; now they were forced to publically defend these programs. As a result of the rampant arguing from 1949 to 1957 the period was labeled "the great debate," during which:

- William H. Whyte accused life adjustment education of producing "the new illiteracy."
- Harry G. Wheat claimed that "life adjustors" were unwilling to pay the price of the hard persistent work necessary for a traditional education. They concentrated too much on individual needs, he said, and did not challenge students, thereby denying them the penalty of failure and the thrill of successful achievement.
- John Keats charged that the movement was too concerned with social reform, and discouraged competition.
- Henry Adams worried that educators futilely attempted to furnish in advance answers to all of life's difficulties instead of providing sound preparation for future problem-solving.
- Admiral Rickover said that this type of education dealt with the "minutia of daily living."[29]
- Richard Hofstadter complained that "only specific things were to be known, say, sewing, fixing a flat tire, or calculating the cost of a cut of meat," and also that certain spheres should be left to the family and other community agencies.[228]

Arthur Bestor saw the public school losing its sense of values by its subordination of essential activities to incidental activities:

> The school makes itself ridiculous whenever it undertakes to deal directly with "real-life" problems, instead of indirectly through the development of generalized intellectual powers.[22]

Bestor maintained that a liberal education produces self-reliance, but that instruction in the problems of daily life assumes that one cannot deal with some matter without having taken a course in it: "The West was not settled by men and women who had taken courses in 'How to be a Pioneer'."[204]

> He believed that the notion that the school must meet every need was "a preposterous delusion that in the end can wreck the educational system without in any sense contributing to the salvation of society." Bestor called for reforms to break the power of the "interlocking directorate" that controlled schools of education, and public school administration, in particular by requiring prospective teachers to take more academic training and by placing teacher training institutions under the stewardship of arts and sciences faculties.

Bestor took great exception to the terms "professor of education" and "Department of Education." He maintained that the whole college was devoted to education and the proper terms were "Department of Pedagogy" and "professors of pedagogy."

Bestor felt that the schools had moved away from the basic disciplines because professors of education had taken on not only a false title, but a function that belonged to an entire body of scholars and professional people as well. They had moved from advising *how* subjects should be taught to dictating *what* subjects should be taught—from the *methods* of instruction to the *content*. These professors undertook to redefine the aims of education by arranging for school programs to be validated by experts in pedagogy rather than by scholars in the program field. Preoccupation with the learning *process* grew so intense that educationists lost sight of its ultimate *purpose*.[22]

Ravitch summarizes the sentiments of two of the best-known critics whose works appeared at the beginning and at the peak of "the great debate": Mortimer Smith's *And Madly Teach*, published in 1949, and Robert M. Hutchins' *The Conflict in Education in a Democratic Society*, published in 1953.

> Smith . . . complained that progressive education had become "the official philosophy of American public education," . . . and that this philosophy was both anti-intellectual and undemocratic. When the public schools expanded to include all children, said Smith, educators turned to progressivism to rationalize their failure to educate all: "Here was a doctrine that released the teacher from his responsibility for handing on the traditional knowledge of the race, a doctrine that firmly implied that one need not adhere to any standards of knowledge but simply cater to individual interests . . ." Smith complained that the schools' effort to educate "the whole child" was not only ridiculous, but dangerous, because it . . . eroded individual freedom and fed the tendency in modern society to bureaucratic control by experts accountable to no one. . . .
>
> In *The Conflict in Education in a Democratic Society*, Robert M. Hutchins asserted that modern pragmatic education was philosophically bankrupt. Progressive education, he said, consisted of four principles; first was "the doctrine of adjustment, which leads to a curriculum of miscellaneous dead facts"—that is, information rather than knowledge—and to vocational training. Such a doctrine, he cautioned, was inadequate because it prizes conformity and devalues independent thought: "Our mission here on earth is to change our environment, not to adjust ourselves to it." Second was "the doctrine of immediate needs," which promotes the disintegration of the school's program since there are so many needs, and which fails to equip the young with "that intellectual

> power which will enable them to meet new situations and solve new problems as they arise." Third was "the doctrine of social reform," which he rejected because public schools would not advocate anything that was not already accepted by society; the way that schools reform society, he insisted, was by making men more intelligent, not by becoming propaganda machines for current political fashions. Fourth was "the doctrine of no doctrine at all," which he attributed to educators who refuse to ask the aims and purposes of education and who pride themselves on having no curriculum: "Perhaps the greatest idea that America has given the world is the idea of education for all. The world is entitled to know whether this idea means that everybody can be educated, or only that everybody must go to school."[204]

The response of the progressive educators was both to defend the system by saying that the schools were better than ever, and to deny that progressive education could be responsible for the failings of the schools because it had really never been implemented. The defenders also attacked the critics as "reactionaries, bigots, zealots, and enemies of public education who were . . . scheming to destroy public education."[204] A recent textbook for teacher education states that most schools, despite some progressive infiltration, never really abandoned traditional American values and the basic skills; "it just appeared that way to many traditionalists."*[265]

Others, believing that progressivism had and still has a great impact on American education, disagree. In his 1964 Pulitzer-Prize winning book, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, Richard Hofstadter warns that life adjustment education remains vital in the attitudes of educators and the public and has merely gone underground. He further warns that attempts to educate "the whole child" are not intended to shape character and personality into a disciplined, productive, creative adult, but rather to help the student adapt gracefully or adjust passively to a world of consumption and hobbies, of enjoyment and social complaisance.[228]

Paul Woodring contends that neither the progressives nor their critics had the answer to "the democratic dilemma:" If we are to have a system of universal education, should the curriculum be adapted to the students' abilities and interests, or should all students study the same basic subjects at varying rates? He maintains that the traditionalists' approach to the slow-learner was retention and the progressives' was social promotion without learning. He called upon the education profession to admit that it did not have all the answers, to tolerate differences, and to stop labeling critics and pre-empting the lay citizens' responsibility for policy making.[204]

Progressivism Revisited

What finally halted the life adjustment manifestation of progressivism was the launching of Sputnik. The fear that the Russians had gained academic superiority resulted in a reversion to traditional education with an emphasis on academic excellence. Bright students were challenged and standardized test scores rose. Typical of this period was the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's report, *The Pursuit of Excellence*. Stressing both equality and excellence, it advocates that the national educational goal be the achievement of potential, and disagrees with progressive educators' advocacy that the schools be a "grand social service center meeting the needs of the individual and the community."[204] And when James Conant issued his report recommending that small high schools be consolidated to provide both general and vocational education, he endorsed ability grouping, and urged that academically talented students be provided with advanced courses.* Also, at that time the National Science Foundation (NSF), became involved in school curriculum reform.

However, the changes were short-lived and a new era of progressivism emanated from a frustration with the schools' inability to resolve social inequality and racial issues, and the failure of compensatory education to enable all children to achieve equally almost overnight. Once again the goal was to change society through the schools, and anything that smacked of the *status quo*—competition, order, or achievement—was fair game.

The criterion for excellence became not how many students were achieving their potential, but how innovative the school was. "On all educational fronts, innovation was the watchword, and some observers confidently spoke of 'the revolution in the schools.' "[204] Concepts introduced or reintroduced during this period included: team teaching, individualized instruction, student contracts, open classrooms, alternative schools, modular scheduling, values clarification, hands-on learning (student inquiry and the discovery method), the teaching of concepts rather than facts, class meetings, "relevancy" in the curriculum, a proliferation of semester and minicourses, the teacher as a facilitator rather than instructor, student choice, student rights, readability level, the affective domain, equity, and self-esteem.

---

*Ravitch says that it is impossible to assess the impact of progressive education in the classroom because many teachers probably ignored it. However, there were changes in some major tests which relieved the schools of requiring a liberal arts curriculum—tangible proof that progressive education did influence what is learned in school. The SAT, a curriculum-free, multiple-choice test of verbal and mathematical skills replaced, in 1947, the College Entrance Examination Board test, firmly rooted in a liberal arts curriculum. The New York State Regents' examination also changed over the years. Whereas once the students were asked to write essays reflecting the study of foreign language, four years of English, and the history of various countries, by 1948 fourth-year language examinations had been eliminated; the only history tested was American; the questions were mostly multiple-choice; and essay topics included "three problems facing seniors" and "advice to parents."[204]

*"What Conant recommended was an academically centered institution *for all students* . . . he urged schools to require at least six academic periods daily, adopt ability grouping devices, and improve conditions for academically talented students. . . . Conant remained faithful to authentic progressive ideals, stressing the need for improved counseling systems, individualized student programs, increased course diversity, and special considerations for slow learners. In endorsing the "comprehensive" public high school as a learning center for adolescents of all capabilities, Conant rejected both private schooling for an academic elite and the European system of categorizing students into academic, technical, and terminal groups, then schooling them accordingly. Conant's call for universal, government-operated high-school programs, and for progressive methods *with academic ends* reflected new public concern with learning outcomes."[228]

Since schools differed considerably in the degree to which they incorporated new ideas, some were affected more than others. In the more progressive schools, many changes occurred. Report cards were issued less frequently and became anecdotal. Letter grades and effort marks were eliminated in some elementary schools, and student achievement was measured according to the student's own ability rather than by comparison with his or her peers, leading many parents to believe their children were achieving more than they actually were. "Smiling faces" replaced grades, and only the number right, not wrong, was noted. Marking errors in red ink was thought to destroy creativity and damage self-esteem. Students were not required to revise themes. Grade inflation became common because low grades were considered harmful. Students were rarely failed, and social promotion was the rule. Group projects and peer tutoring were common, and competition, other than in athletics, was minimized. Semester and final exams disappeared. Standardized tests were considered generally unreliable because they did not assess all that students were exposed to or what was really important. Consequently, the decline in those test scores was downplayed or ignored.*

The "whole child" rather than merely the cognitive development of the child was stressed, and the term "co-curricular" was coined to signify that out-of-class activities were as important as instruction in subject matter. Also, in some schools, students with little academic preparation were invited to sit in circles and express opinions on a variety of topics. The purpose of this activity apparently was to improve self-esteem by encouraging the students to feel that their opinions were as valuable as anyone else's, whether they were valid or not. To help clarify student values, discussions were held and consensus reached about such dilemmas as which segments of society should be allowed to survive in nuclear shelters. The teacher was to remain nonjudgmental.

Dress codes were no longer enforced. Smoking areas were introduced to reduce congestion in the restrooms and relieve teachers and administrators of that monitoring duty. In short, standards of behavior were relaxed. Homework was minimized or eliminated.

In schools adopting formal systems of individualized instruction, teachers spent a great deal of time organizing packets in the various skill areas for each of their students. The students spent time standing in line waiting to have their work approved and to receive their next packet. Each packet contained materials on one stage of development of a particular skill, and the student was to master the contents before moving on. Of course, with each student working independently, classrooms were noisier, and some students found learning difficult.

Curriculum Changes

The changes in curriculum during this period also reflected progressive influence; e.g., the requirements that students take pleasure from an active involvement in learning, that subject matter be relevant, and that the needs of the slow and disadvantaged student be met. As a result, alterations were made in the content and difficulty of the materials, in course requirements, in the number of courses offered, and in the scheduling of instructional time. By attempting to motivate students with these changes, educators hoped to lessen discontent, improve behavior, and reduce truancy.[204] But, Bestor cautions that motivating the student is only a means to the end of improved learning, and that even though the students may be interested and happy, that is no proof they are learning anything. He says that the test of a school is how much its students learn.[22]

Ernest Boyer and others emphasize that what is taught determines what is learned.[33]

> The primary goals of elementary education—teaching young children reading, writing, computing, citizenship, and basic subject matter—were replaced with a combination of psychological

---

*Included here are some excerpts from William Glasser's *Schools Without Failure*, a popular book of the period, which illuminates the thinking behind these innovations: "Probably the school practice that most produces failure in students is grading. . . . It may be that in our current educational system, a student has two choices [sic]: concentrate on grades and give up thinking; or concentrate on thinking and give up grades . . . closed-book examinations are based on the fallacy that knowledge remembered is better than knowledge looked up. . . . Because grades emphasize failure much more than success and because failure is the basis of almost all school problems, I recommend a system of reporting a student's progress that totally eliminates failure . . . failure is never motivating . . . children, from the time they enter school, should be promised that they will not fail. . . . Fact-and-answer centered education usually settles down to a struggle between teachers and pupils. The teachers have a clear upper hand in the struggle because they know the answers to the questions they ask, and the child cannot effectively challenge them concerning the questions they choose as important. . . . Unless children can be taught with books in school that have the same appeal as the barred comic books, reading will never be more than a school activity. . . . A better procedure would be to eliminate texts altogether and have each school district select books from the large variety of relevant, low-priced paperbacks now widely available . . . they are expendable, and they can be changed as needed to insure their relevance. . . . I suggest that the anger [among youthful protesters] stems not merely from the irrelevance of the students' college education but also from their sudden realization that all of their educational experiences from the first grade on have been irrelevant. . . . All problems relative to the class as a group and to any individual in the class are eligible for discussion. . . . In addition to school problems, problems that a child has at home are also eligible for discussion. . . . I have found that children do not think that discussing their problems openly is as difficult as we adults do. . . . Children will often become very personal, talking about subjects that ordinarily are considered private. These may include activities both at home or in their neighborhood. In this situation the teacher should keep in mind that in class meetings free discussion seems to be beneficial and that adult anxieties are often excessive."[106]

> goals and restructured intellectual goals. . . . Curriculum and teaching methodology that were seen to be in conflict with the new . . . goals were either abandoned or restructured.[50]

Specifically, how was curriculum changed? At the elementary level in the more progressive schools, handwriting exercises were practically eliminated; spelling was deemphasized; the new math was introduced; geography became almost nonexistent. Grammar, punctuation, and capitalization—the mechanics of composition—were downplayed. Creative writing was assigned, but the process of writing was not taught; papers were not carefully corrected, if corrected at all, and students were not required to revise or rewrite. History courses minimized historical events and their effects on the present.

On the secondary level, required year-long courses were replaced with elective semester and minicourses "devoted to social activism, ethnicity, valuing, and self-realization."[204] In the high schools he studied, Boyer found that the number of electives ranged from 23 to 296, and that "more attractive" electives drew students away from academic subjects. (He also found that lowered college entrance requirements permitted academic dilution.) In many schools the only courses that all students *must* take are physical education, health, and American history and government.

Systematic or chronological coverage of subject matter was replaced with a thematic or topical approach, and the disciplines were fragmented. Materials were selected on the basis of readability and relevance to the students' needs and interests. Contemporary novels and new "adolescent literature" appeared as textbooks. Content decisions were made increasingly by individual teachers; many designed their own courses. Hardly any knowledge was considered essential.

Some of the changes in curriculum were designed by the NSF. From this foundation

> . . . came a number of innovative curricula. Where present curricula stressed the informational, descriptive, and applied aspects of a subject (the discipline's "products"), the new curricula would teach the structure of the academic discipline; students would learn how a scientist or mathematician or social scientist thinks (the discipline's "processes"). Put another way, instead of learning "about" science, students would "do" science.[204]

While the curriculum may have been made more appealing, it was also made less demanding. Bestor had warned in his review of earlier progressivist proposals that educators often tried to find short-cuts to intellectual discipline by skipping necessary steps. He maintained that before students could practice effective thinking, they needed a command of the essential tools. They must be able to read, to grasp the meaning of the printed page; they must be able to write, to put complex ideas into intelligible prose; they must have some command of mathematical thinking; and they must have a store of reliable information to draw upon. He said that trying to teach students to think without these prerequisites was like "trying to build a house from the roof downwards."[22]

Bestor also warned of a different kind of problem, which resulted from educators' misguided efforts to make the curriculum more interesting by using methods designed for the earliest stages of learning with students who were ready for abstract thinking. He notes that

> . . . in general the human mind advances from pictures to words and to abstract symbols. Once it has made that advance, many kinds of visual aids become time-wasting, round-about, burdensome methods of conveying information that can be got more quickly, accurately, and systematically by means of the printed word.[22]

Methods of teaching specific subjects have also been strongly criticized. What follows is a critical summary of how reading and English have been taught since they are the areas most closely tied to literacy. Examples of criticism in two other areas—math and social studies—are included.

(This summary of the criticism of how reading has been taught, ending with the National Academy Education's recommendations, was prepared for the Council by Michael Brunner of the National Institute of Education (NIE).)

Reading

Background of the criticism. Until 1836 in the United States teachers taught beginning reading, regardless of the age of students, using a phonics method. At this time Thomas Gallaudet, former director of the American Asylum for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Hartford, Connecticut, developed a method for teaching reading to deaf-mutes. This involved teaching children to read by associating pictures with words without the children having any knowledge of the letters which represent the sounds that make up the words. During the next 100 years, other look-say methods were developed and enjoyed some popularity, but it was not until 1930 that the *Dick and Jane*, look-say, basal reading series was born. Very soon all publishing houses were producing such readers. Phonics was out, and look-say had become orthodoxy.

Critics of this orthodoxy maintain that such a strong inter-relatedness exists among those involved in the teaching of reading in this country, that rational discussion about the teaching of reading has become nearly impossible. Dr. David P. Yarington notes in *The Great American Reading Machine* that education professors write the readers which they use to train teachers who, in turn, serve on textbook selection committees to purchase textbooks written by professors and teachers. Moreover, reading specialists, teachers, local administrators, and school board members read textbooks, journal articles, and research reports written by the same people who write the readers and textbooks. Dr. Yarington maintains that:

> The Great American Reading Machine ultimately affects every child in every school; it causes the illiteracy problem in the United States. It is a complex contraption that feeds upon itself; it is self-perpetuating, inbred, and self-supporting. It is like "The House That Jack Built."[286]

Dr. Patrick Groff asserts that the opinions of reading experts have become so polarized that professors who advocate teaching more intensive phonics find their manuscripts rejected and receive a noticeable lack of invitations to speak at state and national meetings, thus preventing a stronger espousal of more intensive phonics.[115]

In 1955 Dr. Rudoph Flesch wrote, *Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It*, a stinging criticism of the look-say method; after this attack the term "look-say" was abandoned, and the "eclectic" approach adopted. Dr. Charles Walcutt, author of *Teaching Reading*, describes the inadequacies of this method:

> [It proposes] . . . a battery of behavioral objectives that are mutually contradictory and that reflect conflicting ideas about the nature of reading. If a child looks at a picture to guess the idea of an unfamiliar word, he is responding as if the printed word were a symbol of a meaning, whereas in fact it is a symbol of a sound. If he studies the context in order to deduce the meaning, he probably is not going to look at the letters and try to identify the sound presented by them, for the two approaches depend on such different ideas of what reading is that they will not be natural responses for the same child. If the child has been taught to look at a word as a shape or configuration, he will not look at it from left to right as a sequence of sounds. If he looks at parts of words, he may see "father" as fat plus her—and there is certainly no future in this for him. When we seek to equip a child to "attack" a new word with this entire battery of clues and concepts, we are throwing him into a state of total confusion unless perchance he picks out the one right method and forgets the others as some children will occasionally do.[270]

Since 1955, approximately 85 percent of our 16,000 school districts have been using this eclectic approach. When it was exposed in the middle 1960s by Dr. Chall, the establishment switched to another new term, "psycholinguistics." And thus, for approximately 20 years, regardless of labels, only about 15 percent of the nation's primary age children have received instruction in direct, systematic, and intensive phonics.

Research. Since 1911, a total of 124 studies have compared the look-say/eclectic approach with phonics-first programs. Not one found look-say superior. In 1965 Dr. Louise Gurren of New York University and Ann Hughes, research director for the Reading Reform Foundation, reviewed 36 studies. They concluded that:

- Rigorous controlled research clearly favors teaching all the main sound-symbol relationships, both vowel and consonant, from the start of formal reading instruction.
- Such teaching benefits comprehension as well as vocabulary and spelling.
- Phonetic groups are usually superior in grades 3 and above.[116]

In 1967, Dr. Chall reviewed 85 statistically valid studies published between 1912 and 1965, and concluded that:

> My review of the research from the laboratory, the classroom and the clinic points to the need for a correction in beginning reading instructional methods. Most school children in the United States are taught to read by what I have termed a meaning-emphasis method. Yet the research from 1912 to 1965 indicates that a code-emphasis method—i.e., one that views beginning reading as essentially different from mature reading and emphasizes learning of the printed code for the spoken language—produces better results, at least up to the point where sufficient evidence seems to be available, the end of third grade.
>
> The results are better, not only in terms of the mechanical aspects of literacy alone, as was once supposed, but also in terms of the ultimate goal of reading instruction—comprehension and possibly even speed of reading. The long-existing fear that an initial code-emphasis produces readers who do not read for meaning or with enjoyment is unfounded. On the contrary, the evidence indicates that better results in terms of reading for meaning are achieved with the programs that emphasize code at the start than with the programs that stress meaning at the beginning.[43]

In 1973, Dr. Robert Dykstra, Professor of Education at the University of Minnesota, reviewed 59 studies. Reporting his findings in *Teaching Reading*, he said:

> Reviewing the research comparing (1) phonic and look-say instruction programs, (2) intrinsic and systematic approaches to helping children learn the code, and (3) code-emphasis and meaning-emphasis basal programs leads to the conclusion that children get off to a faster start in reading if they are given early systematic instruction in the alphabetic code. The evidence clearly demonstrates that children who receive early intensive instruction in phonics develop superior word recognition skills in the early stages of reading and tend to maintain their superiority at least through the third grade. . .
>
> As a consequence of his early success in "learning to read" the child can more quickly go about the job of "reading to learn."[269]

These major reviews—plus those 11 done earlier by Dr. Flesch in 1955, 8 others done after 1973 by Dr. Douglas Carnine of the University of Oregon, and those associated with the Follow Through Project: 124 in all—revealed the superiority of the phonics method. Because the reviewers frequently reviewed the same studies independently, the studies were scrutinized very carefully indeed.

Teaching and teaching materials. Dr. Richard Anderson, Director of the Center for the Study of Reading (CSR) at the University of Illinois, provided some insight into teaching and teaching materials at hearings conducted on April 16, 1982, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in Houston. According to the Center's findings, approximately 96 percent of classroom teachers in grades 1-8 use commercial basal reading programs; 3 percent of the remaining teachers use instructional materials developed by government projects mainly to teach low-achieving or disadvantaged children; only about

1 percent use materials they have developed or library books as a major source of reading materials.

How do teachers use these commercial basal reading programs? The CSR found that teachers followed very closely the instruction in the teacher's manual, frequently teaching with the manual in front of them. An examination of these manuals found them to be inadequate. They provided poor instruction for teaching complex skills. Some directions were poorly organized (e.g., instructions suggested reteaching a skill that had not been taught before!) and still other directions did not provide adequate instruction for teaching the required skills of decoding, vocabulary or comprehension.

Dr. Richard Venezky of the University of Delaware analyzed the four basal reading programs most commonly used in the late 1970s and confirmed the CSR's findings. In an address to the Reading Reform Foundation Conference in 1981, he said:

> The first thing you will discover is approximately 80-90 percent of the children in the United States today are taught with programs that are not instructional programs for reading . . . If you should analyze closely, as I have recently, the four major basals that were available at the end of the 1970s, you will discover that never once in the decoding program do they ever get to the point of applying decoding . . . never once is the child even encouraged to sound out a word. Guessing from context still remains the basis of what is called phonics in the basal programs of America. What is passed off as phonics simply is not a complete approach to phonics.[267]

The investigations conducted at the CSR and by Dr. Venezky are further substantiated by Drs. Isabel Beck and Ellen McCaslin, researchers at the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. They concluded their analysis of four eclectic and four phonics-first basals by saying:

> Thus, a decade after Chall (1967), we do not see the basal programs as being essentially different, along the dimensions we considered, from the way she described them . . . children are still receiving reading instruction from a sight-method approach.[21]

In his foreward to Dr. William S. Gray's *On Their Own in Reading*, Dr. A. Sterl Artley says that teachers cannot teach phonics or phonetics because they are no longer taught how to teach it.

> For a generation the teaching of word-attack skills (phonics) was almost a lost art. During this period some educators, in their anxiety to modify the false emphasis of the past, openly challenged the necessity of any word-attack skills at all—in particular, phonetics. Reading instruction in general gradually deteriorated at this vital point.[11]

One might wonder if the situation has improved in the last two decades. The answer is no. As recently as December of 1982, Victor Froese reported in *Reading Teacher* on a survey he did to determine who were the ten people most influential in providing definitive direction to the teaching of reading. He sent his survey to 1609 professors of education who taught reading pedagogy at 300 graduate schools. The professors were to rank-order their selections. Eight of the top ten named were advocates of the look-say or psycholinguistic methods; advocates of phonics ranked 5th and 7th out of the ten.[101]

Financial considerations. Mary Johnson discusses Manitoba's extensive financial investment in teaching reading. In her book, *Programmed Illiteracy in Our Schools*, she says that

> . . . the annual expenditure on the workbooks was more than four times greater than that on hardcover readers. (The workbooks have to be replaced each year because the children write in them.)
>
> The workbooks to a sight method basal series soon become superfluous whenever phonics is taught by a direct method. This is why articulated phonics is a serious threat to any publishing company which has invested heavily in the project of a basal series. The size of this investment is much greater than most people would imagine. Dr. Jeanne Chall, writing in *Learning to Read*, quotes an estimate given to her in 1966 by the editorial head of the elementary school division of one of the largest publishing houses. This executive said that a full reading system for kindergarten through Grade IV, including books, tapes, films, and tests, probably represents an investment of 25 million dollars.[142]

There were approximately 20,000 primary children in Manitoba in 1965. The annual expenditure for the hard-cover basal readers was $22,420—for workbooks, $99,800.

The economics of phonics instruction provides a different picture. Mr. H. Marc Mason, Principal of Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in Mesa, Arizona, said that in 1978 his school spent $23.42 per student on reading materials. In the same year his teachers were trained in phonetics. By 1981, expenditures for reading materials had dropped to $8.50 per student, and in that year the weighted mean achievement scores had surpassed the national, state, and district norms in language as well as math.

Two years ago, Mr. Charles Micciche, Superintendent of the Groveton, New Hampshire schools, had his elementary teachers trained in phonetics. At the time the junior high school teachers were not trained, but they voluntarily piloted the method. In a letter dated 8 February 1983, he described the junior high experience.

> Our initial expectations were for improvements in spelling scores. However, the end of the year testing pleasantly surprised all of us when the greatest gains were in comprehension. The *average* increase was 1.5 grade levels, with several youngsters scoring 2.5 grade level increases in one year. The teachers felt that once the children overcame the "block" of having to attack each word from memory and had become able to decode words from logical phonetic signals, the floodgates were opened.*

---

*Unpublished correspondence of Mr. Charles Micciche to Mrs. Patti Clark, Trustee, Riggs Institute and Preparatory Academy, Omaha, Nebraska.

Remember that these scores were for junior high school students whose teachers had not been formally trained, but learned "second-hand" from the elementary teachers. The superintendent anticipated that an expenditure for reading materials, which previously had been about $25.00 per student, would be $5.00 per student the following year.

In light of the criticism described, the following findings should be considered.

The Academy's recommendations. Several years ago a blue-ribbon committee of the National Academy of Education was appointed to study the nation's illiteracy problem. Membership on the committee included such respected educators as Kenneth B. Clark of the City University of New York, James S. Coleman of the University of Chicago, John S. Fisher of Columbia, Jeanne Chall of Harvard, and John S. Carroll of the University of North Carolina. Their conclusion:

> We believe that an effective national reading effort should bypass the existing education macrostructure. At a minimum, it should provide alternatives to that structure. That is, the planning, implementing, and discretionary powers of budgeting should not rest with those most likely to have a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo*, especially given their unpromising "track record."

Chall's updated analysis. In an analysis of what has occurred since she published her 1967 findings that phonics is superior to look-say, Chall concludes:

- The teaching of phonics has increased since the book was published.
- Basal readers now include more phonics.
- The reading achievement of 9-year-olds improved between 1970 and 1980.
- Although the debate is not as shrill as it once was and is no longer between phonics and look-say, controversy continues about which kind of phonics should be taught.
- The proponents of an intensive, direct phonics approach should recognize the value of other phonics programs.
- Despite evidence to the contrary, some educationists still claim that direct phonics destroys reading for meaning.
- Teachers and administrators base their opinions and values about the teaching of reading only partly on research; other considerations include their training, their professional interaction, their assessment of the presentations given by publishers' representatives, their philosophies of education and their views on human development.
- For the debate to continue in the face of the additional research conducted since 1967, indicates that it must stem from something else—the controversy between traditional schooling and progressive education. Direct phonics is associated with drill, hard work, and a structured learning environment, whereas meaning emphasis (analytic phonics) is associated with a more natural language development. The assumption is that the more open program leads to greater satisfaction in school than the more structured one, despite some evidence to the contrary.[43]

English

Of all the recent changes in the curriculum, those in English have been the most extensive. Paul Copperman asserts that they contributed more to the deterioration of the reading and writing skills of secondary students than any other curricular change. Extensive modifications in the length, kind, content, and even the aim of English courses were made without any research or evaluation. The only constant was the number of units required of students—usually the equivalent of 3 years—and, although all courses were credited equally, they were far from equivalent.

Some Colorado high schools offer 57 English courses. Between 1968 and 1975, the number of English electives in Sacramento high schools increased from 26 to 80, and the number of California students taking English composition dropped 77 percent between 1971 and 1974. Some of the titles of available courses are by now familiar: Points of View, Literature on Trial, Adolescent Literature, Children's Theater, The Mystery and Detective Story, Responding to Media, Sports Communication, I Love a Mystery, and The Art of Film.[9, 33]

When the schools switched from year-long courses to semester and minicourses, more than time-on-task was affected. Instead of a year-long course which incorporated poetry, prose, world literature, expository and creative writing, and speech, the new shorter courses taught these separately, destroying the intellectual interrelations that once contributed to improved competency in all language activities. Instead of students being exposed to various genres, they were now forced to study only a few and, frequently, to choose what they would study with no understanding of the options. Another problem with the shorter courses was the limited amount of time a teacher had to establish a relationship with students, become aware of individual language strengths and weaknesses, and help the students improve.

We might legitimately ask why English offerings changed so extensively. The most common answer is that increased choice and relevance "turns on" students to English, whereas they were "turned off" by the traditional, boring fare. The teachers supported changes because they thought some discipline problems would be avoided if students were allowed to choose their courses rather than being assigned them. Also, many educators anxious to dispense with tracking, believed that with more choice students would sort themselves. The brighter students would take the more difficult courses, and the slower students, the easier ones. However, many capable students do not choose to take difficult courses.

Few of these new courses offer the kind of disciplined training students need. The increased number of remedial college courses—far more than would be accounted for by increased enrollment—attests to that. For example, in 1975 at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, more than one-third of the journalism applicants could not meet the school's language requirements. At the University of North Carolina at

Chapel Hill, 47 percent of those entering the journalism school failed a simple, high-school level spelling and usage test. At Eastern Michigan University, the number of students needing remedial English doubled from 1970 to 1975. At the University of California at Berkeley, where students come from the top 12.5 percent of high school graduates, nearly half of 1974's freshmen had to enroll in remedial courses. At Temple University in Philadelphia, the proportion of freshmen failing an English placement exam has increased by more than 50 percent since 1968.[233]

Vermont Royster, in a 1975 article entitled "The New Illiteracy," says the language difficulties of bright, eager students in college are "heartbreaking . . . the reach of their mental capacities exceeds their grasp."[220] An article in *Newsweek* that same year agreed that many intelligent, articulate freshmen were seriously deficient in writing skills, because students who cannot read with comprehension do not learn to write well, and secondary curricula no longer require the necessary range of reading. Moreover, as Boyer points out:

> Language is linked to thought . . . thought and language are inextricably connected . . . as students become proficient in self-expression, the quality of their thinking also will improve . . .[33]

Literature. The traditional approach to the study of literature requires students to read great works to increase their appreciation of good literature, to study various authors' styles, to improve their own writing, and to challenge and improve their reading ability. That approach was abandoned: either teachers assigned what they felt was "relevant," or students chose their own reading. Often literature was not *studied* as the works assigned were so superficial there was nothing to study; classes just read and "rapped." A Great Books course might cover some great books, but it might include mediocre and poor ones too. Classroom teachers often lost sight of the most important characteristics of great literature: literary merit, artistic value. Classics are invariably books that have a great deal to "say." But apparently the messages of classic literature weren't direct enough for selection. The only books they found that "spoke to" the students were those that dealt trendily with issues of war, poverty, race and sex discrimination, or with adolescent interests in relationships, sex, authority figures, and conflict. Often the "message" delivered and the response invited became the criteria for textbook selection.

The following excerpts from materials for a junior high workshop on *Pigman* by Paul Zindel—an example of the new adolescent literature—illustrate how the purpose of teaching literature had changed:

> Teachers have discovered that every human being, regardless of age, operates on a system of values. That is, people do those things which they think are important, and they ignore (avoid, rebel at, resent the imposition of) those things that others think are important, but that are unimportant to them . . . . How do we as English teachers help students cope with the problems of emerging adolescence? . . . We teach literature in order to provide opportunities for students to examine and clarify their values.

The teachers were instructed to have the students mark the following statements with an A for agree or a D for disagree:

> It was okay for John's father to falsify an insurance claim because insurance companies charge enough to take care of cases like that.
>
> It was all right for John to make up stories such as the one he told the telephone operator about not being able to dial because he had no arms.
>
> Lorraine's mother was justified in "borrowing" canned goods from her patients because she felt they didn't pay her enough.

The students were to try to reach a *unanimous* decision on each statement. Teachers were warned that there were no right answers and no grades should be given—that these activities were designed to help students clarify their values. In no way were these activities to be used as devices to demonstrate the teacher's values or the values of society at large.

The design of anthologies was also changed. Instead of offering students examples of the best literature available, subject matter became the overriding concern, and publishers now organized texts according to topics or themes that supposedly appealed to adolescents. The problem with such organization is that some of the best writing available does not fit under a selected set of topics, and is omitted.

Some teachers practiced "bibliotherapy"—assigning books that dealt with problems similar to those they believed their students to have. It seemed as though literature was used to mold rather than enlighten the student. Small wonder, with such a full agenda that books were no longer chosen as tools for improving literacy. Lost was the idea that literature succeeds in influencing human thought, when it does, through its persuasive eloquence. Misguided efforts to interest more students in reading resulted in most of them comprehending less.

Readability. Readability was a criterion that became increasingly important for selection of materials. Readability levels are determined by dividing the number of syllables in a passage by the number of words to determine the level of reading difficulty. The lower the resulting number, the more "readable" the material. Support for this "tool" came from those who concluded that many textbooks were too difficult for some students, and who felt that the more easily books could be read, the more likely students were to read them. Publishers began producing simplified books with shorter sentences and easier vocabularies. Again, little research was conducted to determine the long-range effects, probably because the main concern was with "the short term effects of high-readability materials on below-average students."[60]

Copperman has documented the substantially lower readability levels used in texts and concluded:

> In the matter of reduced readability, I see five very destructive tendencies which seem to affect the entire decision-making process in American public education. First, there was no discussion with parents prior to the decision

> to reduce readability. Second, there was no research conducted to determine the long-term effects of the curriculum change before it was instituted. Third, the decision to reduce readability levels to extremely low levels for below-average readers tends to conceal a serious education problem rather than confront it. Fourth, the decision to reduce readability levels for average and above-average readers seems to have been based on a fear of student resistance to hard work. Fifth, the total impact of the decision-making process was to reinforce the literacy hoax. As long as these tendencies dominate the decision-making process in American public education, our schools will fail to provide our children with the quality of education they deserve.[50]

Royster tells of comparing, by happenstance, his daughter's recent copy of Dickens' *David Copperfield* to his own. He reported that in his daughter's version all the "color" had been removed and that the students were being robbed of "the chance to learn the marvelous richness of their language." He believed teenagers were being insulted by the assumption that they could not understand anything beyond basic English.[220]

The concept of controlled vocabulary, most widely recognized in the *Dick and Jane* readers, evolved from the experience of John West, who found that introducing no more than two new words per hundred words of text proved successful in teaching English as a second language to adults in India. "The concept and formula of controlled vocabulary became an accepted element of classroom reading materials without anyone ever having empirically tested its validity with classroom learners."[150] Moreover, as Copperman points out

> . . . Even though the schools may claim they are trying to be fair to their low-ability student, they are in fact reducing the educational opportunities of all their students.[50]

Writing. Attitudes about teaching composition changed drastically with the result that much less was demanded of students; consequently, their writing skills suffered greatly. Even though some teachers assigned writing frequently and many assigned an occasional paper, most students were not instructed in the *process* of writing. Teachers did not thoroughly correct papers, or require that students revise and rewrite drafts.

Boyer reports that during 2,000 hours of high school observation, his observers rarely found writing being taught, and when writing assignments were given, often "the papers were returned late with only brief comments in the margin."[33] But anyone who has ever watched students getting papers back knows that they eagerly await the results and carefully read the comments—if the teacher takes seriously the job of correcting their efforts, is sincere in wanting to help them improve, and holds each student responsible for correcting mistakes.

In an article, "Are We Becoming a Nation of Illiterates?" Vance Packard said that one of the reasons for the decline in writing was a revolt against rules in the late 1960s, that

> . . . anything suggesting the value of disciplined practice or respect for the "mechanics" of writing was widely scorned. There was a shift to stress spontaneity, creativity, and "feelings," with less concern about conciseness or lucidity in writing.[188]

There was a growing willingness to accept all writing as good, and not to label bad writing *bad*; i.e., there was not much candor about the true quality of student writing. The 1960s also saw a subtle shift from expository writing to "creative" writing and an corresponding neglect of grammar, structure, and style—as though teachers believed that rules stifled spontaneity. The de-emphasis of rules also stemmed from the theory, then prevalent, that there are no real standards for any language, that the spoken idiom is superior to the written word, and that there is no real need for students to study the rules of their language.

Another article written by philologist Mario Pei in 1975, "Why Johnny Can't Write," warned that

> . . . already much of academia is controlled by "a school preaching that one form of language is as good as another;" that at the age of 5 anyone who is not deaf or idiotic has gained a full mastery of his language; that we must not try to correct or improve language, but must leave it alone; that the only language activity worthy of the name is speech on the colloquial, slangy, even illiterate plane; that writing is a secondary, unimportant activity.[233]

But this attitude was apparently widespread among educators. In a document entitled "Students' Rights to Their Own Language" that was "more a political tract than a set of educational precepts," the National Council of Teachers of English adopted the extraordinary policy statement: "standard English is just a 'prestige' dialect among many others, and . . . insistence on its predominance constitutes an act of repression by the white middle class."[50, 232]

Others have argued that knowing standard English is a prerequisite to writing, that learning to write is learning to think, and that denying our youth the opportunity to gain command of their language is a "pernicious form of oppression." Royster emphasized that even the most intelligent among us are reduced to the level of children when we are deprived of commonly understood words and sentence structure, because without language we can neither learn nor think. He deplored what we are doing to ourselves by denying our young the tools of thought.[220]

New Math

Other than "Man: A Course of Study (MACOS)" an anthropology course used in the upper elementary grades and which came under congressional scrutiny in 1976, the most controversial NSF-funded curriculum revision—and certainly the most publicized—was "the new math." Its purpose was to teach students basic concepts—the logic underlying mathematics—but its emphasis on the deductive approach and elimination of drill caused one of its chief proponents to admit that "we're in danger of raising a generation of kids who can't do computational arithmetic."[9]

> "New math" developers failed to realize that repetitive drill and memorization of basic facts result in the ability to gain immediate and automatic access to certain basic stored information, an ability which is the basis of any skill. Its developers also committed a basic error in requiring young children to learn the theoretical basis of a simple skill before mastering the skill itself. Finally, research by Piaget implies that the level of intellectual development required for the mastery of basic mathematical concepts does not occur in most children before fifth or sixth grade, yet the new math was introduced in the primary grades.[50]

The impetus for much of the innovation was the desire to avoid rote learning or drill because of the belief that such methods were boring and destroyed creativity, and as Frank Armbruster points out, because rote learning is identified with rigid discipline and structure.[9] However, concepts can only be understood once students have attained the basics.[204]

> . . . there is good evidence that creative problem solving only occurs if all possible relevant data are so well remembered that they can be recalled very rapidly. It seems then that, paradoxically, rote memorization is required as the first stage for achieving creative insight.[9]

Social Studies

A desire to teach a short-cut to reasoning was also evident in the changes in social studies. It was assumed that young people could reason clearly about current events, social issues, "problems of democracy," and other concerns without the benefit of background information or historical perspective. There was an increasing interest in how students *felt* about an issue rather than what they *knew* about it. The brighter students suffered as much as the poorer ones:

> The greatest problems we have had with college students in recent years seem to have stemmed from their lack of information and basic skills. In attempting to follow the advice of "identity crusader" educators and involving themselves in "relevant" issues . . . students were led unknowingly to try to reinvent the wheel or to reach conclusions about our current society, country, and system with little, if any, knowledge about other eras, societies, countries, and systems with which to make comparisons.[9]

Even though there was great emphasis on preparing our youth for change, and history is the study of change in human affairs, history per se was virtually replaced with consideration for only contemporary affairs. In addition to the one-dimensional treatment of history, less time was spent studying it as students could receive social studies credit for such courses as "Death and Dying" and "Witchcraft." Students were robbed of the stabilizing perspective of the experiences of past generations.

Bestor's description of courses in an earlier progressive period bears a striking resemblance to those offered in recent years, once again establishing the roots of the curriculum changes that precipitated the achievement decline:

> The "social studies" purported to throw light on contemporary problems, but the course signally failed, for it offered no perspective on the issues it raised, no basis for careful analysis, no encouragement to ordered thinking. There was plenty of discussion, but it was hardly responsible discussion. Quick and superficial opinions, not balanced and critical judgment, were at a premium. Freedom to think was elbowed aside by freedom not to think, and undisguised indoctrination loomed ahead. . . .[22]

Organizational Changes

Open Education

One of the best known innovations of the period was the "open school" concept which embodied freedom of movement, more student autonomy, and more emphasis on individualized education. American open education borrowed heavily and not very accurately from the British infant schools as described by A. S. Neill's *Summerhill*, a work about his private school that catered primarily to students with discipline problems. Although the book did not have much impact in America when it was first published in 1960, by 1969 the educational and social climate was more receptive to Neill's principles of

> . . . complete democracy between students and teachers, total freedom for students, abolition of tests and grading, and a general denigration of scholarship and intellectual training in favor of creativity and self-directed play.[50]

Neill claimed that since children are innately wise and realistic they will achieve their potential without any interference from adults. He criticized parents for placing too much emphasis on the learning side of school, and declared that "all prize-giving and marks and exams sidetrack proper personality development."[204] His book sold more than 200,000 copies in a year.

In 1967, *The New Republic* published three articles about the revolution in English primary education which involved "new ways of thinking about how young children learn, classroom organization, the curriculum, and the role of the teacher." A minor sensation ensued: 100,000 offprints were sold, and by 1970 open education, the label assigned this new approach at some point, was our latest MOVEMENT.[204]

The British model was just what the doctor ordered for American educators who had been brought up on the progressive creed squelched by critics in the aftermath of Sputnik.

> British practices . . . encompassed the tenets of America's own educational progressivism: that children learn at different rates; that children want to learn; that the best way to motivate learning is through projects, experiences, and activities; that, for children, the distinction between "work" and "play" is false; that division of knowledge into subjects is artificial; and that such external stimuli as grades and tests cannot compare to the power of the child's own interest.[204]

Young teachers who disliked the authoritarianism of traditional schooling saw in the new open concept the opportunity to be more humane and democratic. Part of open education's meteoric success was that it offered so much to so many different audiences:

> State education departments, federal agencies, teacher-training institutions, magazines, network commentators, foundations, and individual educators flocked to its banner . . . school officials knocked down the walls between classrooms or designed their new buildings without walls.[204]

Once again, the interpreters took great liberties with the original. Although the British infant schools accepted Jean Piaget's theory that learning takes place in stages and moves from concrete experiences to abstract thinking, the authors of an article in *Saturday Review* mutilated that concept:

> "Piaget is critical of classrooms where the teacher is the dominant figure, where books and the teacher's talking are basic instructional media, and where large group instruction is the rule, and oral or written tests are used to validate the whole process." When children in need of stimulation are subjected to such an environment . . . their minds may be damaged or "actually atrophy."[204]

The authors of this article also enlarged the range for open education from ages 5-7, the ages of children in the British infant schools, to students ages 5-12.

Shortly thereafter, Charles Silberman, in his book *Crisis in the Classroom*, further expanded and publicized the open classroom concept. He claimed that the same principles that work for 5-, 6-, and 7-year olds also hold true for older students, and that open education should therefore be extended into the high schools which were "grim, joyless places," "mindless," and preoccupied with order and control. Silberman also put informal education into a far broader context. He broadened a pedagogical approach designed for young children "into an idology about children, learning, and schooling that was intended to revive society and the quality of life in America."[204] Like previous reformers, Silberman associated social reform with school reform.

Free Schools

One of the more radical manifestations of the open education movement, and an outgrowth of *Summerhill*, was the "free school" movement. Its educational philosophy did not differ that much from what has already been described, but these schools carried Neill's principles to even greater lengths. What made these schools so different was their purpose: they wanted to abolish authority—especially relations between teachers and students—not merely to educate children better, but to create a different kind of human being and a new kind of society—more cooperative, more communal. Neill became concerned about the damage his followers were doing and wrote a sequel to *Summerhill* urging teachers not to confuse educational democracy with educational anarchy,[50] but it did not receive the attention that his first book had. Although the average life span of a free school was only 18 months, and their total attendance approximated 20,000, they nevertheless became a media event. Some public school systems responded by creating "alternative schools," which were more flexible in structure, discipline, and curriculum.

No Schools

During this period there was also a spate of books that called for the "deschooling" of society. Their proposals ranged from doing away with compulsory education to doing away with schools altogether. Two of the more radical authors, Everett Reimer and Ivan Illich, stress that cognitive teaching is not the most important function of the schools; child care, social screening or sorting, and values teaching or state indoctrination are more important.[265] They argue for reducing the scope and revising the role of the schools while increasing the functions of other community agencies.

Ability Grouping

Another organizational change was the movement away from homogeneous grouping. Until the mid-1960s placement of students in classes had been loosely based on ability, but because so many minority children were in average or below-average classes, the civil rights movement rejected ability grouping. Many educators are also convinced that ability grouping is detrimental to average and below-average students. Others feel that ability grouping enables teachers to accomplish more because they can concentrate on fewer needs. How to efficiently group students for instruction remains a question but the answer in recent years has been heterogeneous grouping.

The Critics

As with the progressive education movement of the earlier era, critics also took strong exception to the educational trends of the recent era and were also unheeded.

In 1976, Koerner noted that educators and lay people of widely differing views were concluding that instruction in basic subjects was seriously deficient. He warned that educational innovations are frequently only passing fads for which American education has an enduring appetite. He also reported the negative conclusions of the Ford Foundation's study of the effects of the $30 million it had spent on innovation.[148]

Clifton Fadiman wrote about a series of solidly documented reports published in the *Los Angeles Times* showing the decline of basic skill achievement, and said that it was unequaled in history. He also ridiculed the excuses given for the declining College Entrance Examination Board scores, which included dietary deficiencies, a lack of respect toward institutions, changes in family size, and the lowering age of puberty—but not the educational establishment itself. Fadiman indicted the establishment for lowering graduation requirements, social promotion, grade inflation, the reduced number of academic classes, an increase in electives, and a growing prejudice against the high achiever. He stressed that while all citizens may be equal, all ideas and all subjects are not, and warned against the suspicion that a commitment to reasonable intellectual standards is elitist and antidemocratic. Fadiman advocated that schools concentrate on teaching those subjects which, once learned, enable students to learn all other matters trivial or complex, which the schools can't possibly have time to teach. That is, the schools should teach those subjects with generative power.[85]

Donald Myers raised questions after his study of open classrooms in 1974:

> What is our attraction to play, especially when it is advocated as a vehicle through which students learn cognitive concepts and skills? Why is it difficult for so many American educators to acknowledge that writing a sentence, speaking clearly, playing the piano, or learning inferential statistics, is simply difficult work?[204]

He also points out that the American interpreters of the informal British classroom had failed to understand that the good teachers in that system "provided more structure, not less; emphasized the 3 Rs; and provided a sensible balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation."[204]

Martin Mayer in 1973 stated that he could not accept the conventional wisdom that a "positive self-image" is always desirable. He thought that a degree of humility was neither incompatible with a belief that one could accomplish things nor with actual accomplishment.[179]

A few years later, Armbruster asserted that the emphasis on relativity in the "new style"—that everybody is as knowledgeable as everybody else on any given subject and that facts are unimportant—causes a child not to value being well-informed, and can adversely affect his or her whole life. He also discusses the work of Lester Crow and others which provided evidence that the permissiveness of the progressive approach was rejected by underprivileged children because it was so alien to their culture.[9]

In "Why Our Schools Are Failing to Teach," Margaret Mead says that two movements—one to make school easier for minority children who we presume can't learn, and the other to make school interesting and undemanding for privileged children—have resulted in teachers who are unable to teach and children who are unable to learn. She argued that although the brightest and most motivated children might be able to learn in the best progressive schools, too often:

> What they know floats unanchored and awash; they cannot organize their thoughts . . . in a world in which so much depends on accuracy and on each person's ability to pay attention, to organize and to communicate facts and ideas, we are turning too many of our children into barbarians without access to the knowledge to which they are the rightful heirs.[170]

In *U.S. News and World Report*, Howard Fleiger asked, "Can Teachers Teach?"

> Every employer, career counselor and educator in the country knows that pupils by the thousands are being advanced grade by grade to eventual graduation as functional illiterates.
>
> They cannot read, write, spell or do their sums with anything more complicated than a number under 10. They are moving from school to the job market with little equipment to earn an honest living and no knowledge to advance in any skill.[96]

In *Newsweek*, poet Karl Shapiro described America as in the midst of a literacy breakdown, and historian Jacques Barzun observed that we have ceased to think with words and have stopped teaching our children that the truth cannot be told except by the right words.[232] Vermont Royster wrote in *Change* magazine that our educational system has accepted an anti-language culture, and that "The young do not learn their language simply because they are not taught."[220] As a columnist in 1975, President Reagan reported that a survey of 436 colleges by the Association of Departments of English found that students were leaving high school with much poorer training than ever before.[205]

In a speech to the National School Boards Association, Fenwick English stated that school curricula had never been in a greater state of disarray because so much had been adapted, adopted, and superimposed over what had gone before, and that whatever interested the students had become the only criterion by which to validate a curriculum. He chided school board members for not exercising their responsibility for curriculum instead of merely rubber-stamping professional decisions.[80]

Fred Hechinger stated that teachers had stopped teaching the basics of writing and that the schools had sacrificed "much of the analytical part of learning to mere spontaneity."[121] Two years later, Copperman wrote that the writing skills of students had deteriorated because teachers were not assigning discursive writing to the extent that they had previously, and that reading skills were weaker because less and much simpler reading was assigned. He concluded:

> We have a curriculum without standards, with insipid content, that neither exposes students to their cultural heritage nor trains them in the reading and writing skills they will need to function in society.[50]

In 1976, Neville Bennett warned:

> On both sides of the Atlantic innovation is being urged without research. This of course is not new in education, the common response being that educational decisions cannot afford to wait for years while careful trials are instituted and evaluated. Yet it is a strange logic which dictates that we *can* afford to implement changes in organization and teaching which have unknown, and possibly deleterious effects on the education of the nation's young.[226]

Also in 1976, the American Institute of Research found that educational innovation and formal individualization of instruction correlates negatively with reading and math achievement.[50]

Gilbert Sewell recently said that reformers in the Sixties and Seventies were more interested in cultural pluralism and subject novelties than in scholarship and discipline, and that they were blind to falling student achievement. The new ideas that seemed "wise, penetrating, shrewd and political" to them struck others as "muddled, silly, and offensive." He contends that:

> Many of the schoolhouse catastrophies of our times have achieved customary status out of district-level follow-the-leaderism and unsound program evaluation. And many unproductive programs remain, sustained by organized loathing of quality control in most educational trade associations and by inept, biased, or contradictory research.[226]

In "Twenty-five Years of American Education: An Interpretation," Joseph Adelson concludes:

> We now find that a blessed amnesia has begun to settle over us, and with it a tendency to minimize the impact of that period, on the grounds that the consequences were limited. In fact they were extensive, enduring, and have yet to be repaired. . . .[2]

The Societal Shift: Traditional to Permissive

Schools, of course, do not exist in a vacuum. The turbulent environment in which the schools found themselves in the last two decades cannot be ignored in a serious discussion of achievement decline. Several theories attempt to explain why such turbulance occurred in America.

T. H. White suggests that Americans were sobering up after a long intoxication following the great victory in World War II, which had convinced us that American will, knowledge, and drive made us invincible. Then when the idea that government-funded programs could cure any ill at home or abroad could not withstand the test of reality, our disillusionment engendered attack on all elements of the *status quo*. A leading educator of the time, John Gardner, adds:

> There are some people who have what I think of as a vending machine concept of social change. You put in a coin and out comes a piece of candy. If you have a social problem you pass a law and out comes the solution.[277]

Others have argued that because the proportion of young people in the total population was high, social pathology among the young increased. Copperman says that we experienced an almost uncontrollable psychological revolt, fueled by an exploding population of adolescents. This "revolt" succeeded because of a sharply decreased ratio of "mature, authoritative adults to adolescents, which, [if the adults had been more numerous] might have been able to control it."[50]

Still others believe that we were experiencing another effect of the more affluent postindustrial society—a power shift from the more traditional realms of business, church, etc., toward a recently evolved elite centered in government, education, and journalism.

Perhaps the period represented an inevitable turn of historical cycles. Ravitch tells us that when the 1960s opened, there "clearly was something stirring, some seismic shifting within the culture," a reaction against the 1950s, a period when

> . . . inflation was low and peace was maintained, but . . . Democrats, liberals, and others of the left perceived the Eisenhower era as intellectually sterile, politically stagnant, and culturally bland, led by men who were self-righteous, business-minded, provincial, materialistic, conservative, and Philistine. . . .[204]

Writings of the time celebrated spontaneity and sensuality and decried the faceless bureaucracy, meaningless work, and the inability of an individual to control his life.[204]

Whatever the reason or reasons for the upheaval of the '60s America experienced a long, noisy rebellion against the "establishment" with a loss of authority, an increase in permissiveness, and a resulting foreshortening of childhood. The extent to which these societal changes have contributed to a decline in literacy has not been adequately studied, but common sense would indicate a cause-and-effect relationship. A brief discussion of some of these changes and their effects follows.

Increased Viewing of Television

It is widely recognized that young people spend more time watching commercial television than they spend in school. Goodlad estimates that by age 18, the average American child has spent 9 to 10 percent of his or her time watching television and 8.5 percent in school.[110] In the fall of 1981, *Daedalus* reported that during the twenty years from 1960 to 1980, television moved from 8th place to 3rd place (out of 10) in the order of influence on youths age 13 to 19.[228]

> During the 1960s and 1970s, the electronic media moved in on this increasingly cohesive young group, catering to its interests, providing it a passing array of larger-than-life role models, creating its tastes, molding its habits of consumption, teaching it strategies to use with parents. . . .[110]

This enormously powerful, hypnotic form of entertainment often portrays characters and behaviors that represent the extremes in neurotic and socially pathological behavior. Parents have little chance

> . . . of controlling their children's exposure to every variety of adult sexuality, every permutation and combination of human brutality and violence, every aspect of sickness . . . the material available to children today on television, particularly on cable TV, is far less appropriate for their consumption than what they were likely to run into in their reading, viewing or listening in the past.[283]

This newly dominant influence on young people contains vulgar and trivial images produced by experts at spectacle creation who manufacture tantalizing fantasies:

> On television positive models of intelligent adults are rare. Intellectual quest and achievement are almost never portrayed as legitimate, much less exemplary, activities. Highly educated, erudite, or discerning television characters are invariably presented as snobbish, repressed, effete or conniving.[228]
>
> Indeed, it is quite noticeable that the majority of adults on TV shows are depicted as functionally illiterate, not only in the sense that the content of book learning is absent from what they appear to know but also because of the absence of even the faintest signs of a contemplative habit of mind.[195]

With few exceptions, adults on television do not take their work seriously, have foresight or extended conversations, or allude to anything that is not familiar to an eight-year-old child.[195]

Effects of TV Viewing

What have been some of the effects of this increased television viewing? Sewell says:

> Research shows that television can reduce children's attention span. It evidently stunts the academic development of heavy watchers, making them less patient with expository presentations, less able to generate their own detailed private fantasies, and less agile at translating printed symbols into thoughts. A 1980 California state assessment of sixth- and twelfth-graders found an inverse relationship between rates of television watching and performance on academic achievement tests. "The relationship was very strong, and none of several other factors—such as socioeconomic status and English language fluency—that were analyzed substantially affect it," the report concluded.[228]

Others observe that television's hyperkinetic visual imagery can reduce the appeal of the printed word;[228] that television's purposely simplified vocabulary and concept level, used to reach the widest possible audience, does not challenge youngsters; that television creates an expectation that learning should be easy, passive, and entertaining; and that because television promotes such complete passivity, it weakens students' task orientation.[50] The National Committee on Reform of Secondary Education made these observations:

- Television leads children to synthetic as opposed to analytic modes of learning.
- When knowledge is obtained from TV, the line between reality and fantasy is more difficult to draw.
- An education which clashes with the expectation children have derived from TV is likely to be ineffective.[179]

Christine Nystrom says that television viewing also encourages impulsive behavior. Television's message is that whatever people want, they deserve to have and have now; therefore, one need not exercise restraint.[184] Sewell tells us that television contributes to the "instant gratification" syndrome, as all problems are fixed and all wishes gratified within thirty minutes.[228]

Nystrom also observes that because television must get and hold the attention of viewers hour after hour, it devours conventional material and constantly pushes deeper into human experiences to provide something new; this pursuit of novelty invades private and adult worlds. Lack of restraint and pursuit of novelty contribute to discipline problems and diminished respect for adults.[184] Marie Winn states that through television children gain entry into a confusing adult world that cannot help but shake their confidence and trust in those elders who once seemed omniscient, powerful, and good.[283] Sewell agrees that television cuts at the margin between childhood and adulthood by revealing secrets, mysteries, contradictions, and tragedies once considered unsuitable for children, and by the constant admonition that adults and young people must achieve "democratic" and "understanding" relationships.[228] Winn also contends that television has played a crucial role in hastening the end of childhood and that, as children imitate sophisticated behavior and language they see and hear on television, they give the impression that they are more mature than they really are and are treated accordingly.[283] Certainly young people are influenced by the behavior they see on television and assume that society condones the behavior—as well as their imitation of it—since they are being permitted to view it. Copperman maintains that children passively absorb the behaviors they view on TV as viable options in their own lives and cites a number of studies that suggest that violence on TV induces violent behavior in children.[50]

Copperman also stresses what children are missing during the time in front of the TV screen: working around the house with their parents; doing homework, reading, or collecting stamps; cleaning their rooms, washing dishes, or mowing grass; listening to an adult discussion; playing baseball, going fishing, and painting pictures.[50]

Goodlad adds that television does not educate in a way that requires deliberate systematic attention, and warns that the results can be detrimental "when an institution increasingly becomes educative without becoming conscious of its new role."[110] Armbruster describes television as a new environmental factor, and concludes that parents have never before had to cope with such a potent force.[9]

Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse

Another phenomenon of the period was the beginning of substantial drug and alcohol abuse by young people. By 1974 drugs had moved from 9th place to 4th place in the Gallup Poll's listing of major problems confronting school systems. In a representative sampling of colleges in 1970, the percentages of participating students who admitted to having smoked marijuana ranged from 33 to 82 percent.[283] High percentages of high-school students were also involved to some extent—mostly with marijuana, but a minority with harder drugs. Boyer reports that about 50% of high school principals feel that drug and alcohol abuse is a moderately serious problem.

In recent years, schools have begun to confront this problem by appointing drug and alcohol counselors and cooperating with community agencies and parent-support groups. However, when first confronted with the situation, many school personnel refused to acknowledge the problem. They did not know how to deal with it, feared lawsuits if they took action, and preferred to protect the district's reputation, not to mention their own. Students, of course, received subtle messages when unsupervised smoking areas were established where they could smoke "pot," and when peers could come to class "stoned" with no action being taken.*

---

*The difference between earlier and current approaches is demonstrated by a new policy passed by the Upper Arlington School District in Ohio which states that teachers who "look the other way" now are in violation of school policy; such teachers may now be liable legally if they do not report the students.

One has to wonder where concern and regard for the welfare of students were when school personnel were aware that students were using drugs, yet made no effort to help them or inform their parents. Incidents at school were hushed up. Because parents thought that only a very few students were involved, they did not become sufficiently alarmed. Many parents were not aware of the symptoms. Moreover, norms of dress and behavior were so bizarre that problematic behavior could easily go undetected. Many parents of those now in their 20s and 30s can attest to the emotional turmoil, lost opportunities, pain, and tragedy that drug usage caused.

In Goodlad's recent study of thousands of people, parents *now* list drug and alcohol use as the number-one problem in high schools and the number-two problem in the junior highs, just behind student misbehavior.[110]

Whatever the reason that young people elected to experiment with drugs—boredom, loneliness, not enough work to do, affluence, poverty, low self-esteem, thrill-seeking, risk-taking, or the enormous peer pressure—they were unable to avoid exposure to drugs, had easy access to whatever they might want, and felt little guilt about such indulgence since much of their culture subtly (or not so subtly) condoned it.

Effects of Abuse

The more time students wasted on drugs, the less time they had to study. But beyond that, drugs can induce apathy, which affects both attitude and performance:

> A National Academy of Science publication (1981), for example, shows that . . . marijuana . . . does inhibit short-term memory, decreases creativity, shortens attention span, and reduces energy and motivation. All of these factors, of course, harm the adolescent user's academic performance. And even students who cut back on drug use find themselves at a developmental level far below their peers and feel powerless to catch up.[163]

Drug usage can also "retard ego formation, corrode goal-orientation...impair reading comprehension, speech, long-term memory, quick judgment and other mental skills."[228] In fact, some believe that increased drug usage contributed to the decline in SAT scores.[266] Drug-involved students become increasingly alienated from the mainstream of school activity:

> Because drugs are illegal, they must often be used in secret, and repeated secretive behavior results in a decreased sense of school community among adolescents. With so much energy invested in drug-centered activities, students find school less appealing, and begin to regard school activities as silly or at least irrelevant.[163]

The Student Protest Movement

While the protesters were mostly college students, the influence of the movement was felt in the high schools. In their "Port Huron Statement," the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) criticized American society for racial injustice, the danger of nuclear war, the Cold War, the maldistribution of wealth, the meaninglessness of work, the political apathy of students, and the isolation of the individual. Other complaints centered on large classes; neglected undergraduates; the bureaucracy of the university; and the lack of: programs in black studies; separate black dormitories, black students, faculty, and administrators; and special admissions for unprepared students.[204]

At colleges all over the country, demonstrations, teach-ins, and sit-ins were held, buildings were seized by rioters, professors and administrators were held hostage, research and records were damaged or destroyed, confrontations with police and the National Guard occurred, and classes were cancelled. Colleges closed down.

What provoked the uprisings? In addition to sympathy for civil rights demands and anger over the military draft, the Vietnam War itself is the reason most often given. However, as Ravitch points out, student unrest occurred at the same time in many other countries which were neither involved in Vietnam nor struggling with racial problems. Further, American student activism has historically increased in times of social tension. But Ravitch notes that as early as 1967 some SDS members met with revolutionaries from communist countries. She claims that SDS radicalization preceded the opposition of students to the war, which did not occur until 3 years after President Johnson committed American troops to Vietnam. At Berkeley there was a saying, "The issue is not the issue." Mark Rudd bragged that the SDS had created the issues. Moreover, the racial and military policies of an institution were less an indicator of future unrest than were the characteristics of the student body and faculty; that is, the more permissive the institution, the more likely protests were to occur there. Ravitch notes that:

> . . . studies showed that the protest-prone institutions were those that had a critical mass of radical students . . . from upper middle-class, high-income, professional families; both mother and father were highly educated, with a liberal-to-radical political orientation (a significant number of radicals were children of 1930s radicals). Rather than revolting against their parents, they were carrying forward their parents' ideals by revolting against society. . . .[204]

The era of protest on college campuses was sustained by a number of things: liberal professors who were sympathetic to the aims of the militant students; the inability of college administrations to handle the demonstrations (an inability that stemmed from their own muddled sense of mission); the constant attention of the media; and the lack of official disapproval registered in a reasoned, calm manner.

Effects of the Movement

The ramifications of the student protest movement included more student control over schools and academic standards. The liberal arts curriculum suffered. Frivolous courses were added. Open admission was instituted at numerous schools. Standards declined rapidly:

> One national survey found that the number of institutions requiring English, a foreign lan-

> guage, and mathematics as part of everyone's general education declined appreciably from 1967 to 1974.[204]

Some courses carried a pass/fail option to letter grades. Remedial courses increased. Reduced college requirements accommodated and encouraged reduced academic standards in high schools.

Another more subtle result was a lessening of rational discourse. After exposure to picket-sign slogans symbolizing complicated issues, as well as commercial jingles on TV, less well-educated college students—many of them teachers-to-be—seemed to begin thinking in slogans. Discussing the youth of the period, John Wilkinson claimed that:

> Very few can enter into any conceivable dialogue because their vocabularies are so exiguous that the primary condition for dialogue (as distinguished from mere "bull sessions") is lacking.[28]

Frank Blackington noted that the cultural thrust of the era was more manipulative than deliberative, and consequently more affective than cognitive. Consequently, he warned that the schools and anyone contemplating reforms to educate more rationally skilled citizens, should consider the question, where would they be welcome?[28]

Finally, one of the most noticeable effects of the period was a decline in authority over youth, who in turn developed strong disrespect for the reason, order, and self-discipline that educational institutions must rely on.

> The discordant sixties have passed, leaving their legacy. Today many parents, teachers, and other adults raised during that time try reflexively to tolerate any juvenile act, no matter how obnoxious, troubling, or destructive, so as not to appear uptight, illiberal, or insensitive. Remembering the intense generational conflicts of the past, they are eager to avoid standard-setting that young people might challenge successfully.[228]

Sewell believes that because standard-setting was avoided, young people were denied the adult role models they need. He supposes that educators trained in an earlier progressive philosophy had few defenses against the demands for more relevant curricula and more attention to individual needs. They appeased students by creating new programs and abandoning strict standards of achievement. "They did everything except defend the integrity of the curriculum and a reasonable code of conduct."[228]

The Change in the Perception of Childhood

The attitude that adults have toward children has changed perceptibly in the last several years with the result that the two generations have meshed in many ways. Neil Postman refers to the "adultified" child and the "childified" adult when he cites the rapid reorientation in popular media—films, TV programming and adolescent literature—portraying children who are "in social orientation, language, and interests no different from adults."[196] At the same time, as we have mentioned, adults are not depicted as more mature and responsible than children, but merely as older and under fewer restrictions. Postman cites the 1980 Nielsen Report in which many of the top syndicated television programs were listed as favorites by all three age groups—2-11, 12-17, and over 18. He points to the work of Judy Blume and other writers who simulate adult themes and language in their novels and whose adolescent characters are portrayed as miniature adults.[195]

This merging of child and adult perspectives can also be observed in our use of language. Postman maintains that in addition to reduced language competence in the young, indifference to language on the part of parents, teachers, and other influential adults is increasing, "that adult control over language does not in most cases significantly surpass children's control over language." He speculates that, if anything, "the language of the young is exerting more influence on adults than the other way around."[195]

Historians might point out that we are coming full cycle through years of nurturing, appreciating, even romanticizing childhood, back to the middle ages where little difference existed between children and adults. Winn describes the change as a move from the Age of Protection to the Age of Preparation—a swing of the American pendulum between the desire to protect our children and our need to teach them self-reliance.[283] In the past several years parents have been exercising less control over their children at even earlier ages.

Preparers, Protectors and Liberators

At one end of the spectrum were adults who would completely "liberate" children from control and supervision. Writing in 1977, Ronald and Beatrice Gross maintain that:

> A good case can be made for the fact that young people are the most oppressed of all minorities. They are discriminated against on the basis of age in everything from movie admissions to sex. They are traditionally the subjects of ridicule, humiliation, and mental torture by adults. Their civil rights are routinely violated in homes, schools, and institutions.[113]

At the other end of the spectrum were parents who still wanted to nurture and protect their children. They felt that children cannot handle adult problems and responsibilities, and should not have to. They resented the unavoidable exposure of their children to that which they feel is inappropriate. They recalled that in their youth, society protected them.

Other parents, who would have really preferred that their children remain "children" longer, have found that attempts to protect them were futile and reluctantly agreed that it was better to prepare them for the "real world." They know that their children are influenced by media, tempted by drugs and sex, and subjected to peer pressure—all situations over which parents have no control. They also realize that no matter how closely they monitor their own youngsters' environment, their children will be interacting with others not under such supervision. Besides, as we have pointed out, children sometimes imitate adult behavior and language so convincingly that parents, misjudging the sophistication and maturity of their youngsters, honestly believe they do not need protection.[283]

Permissive Parents

Conscientious parents, aware of psychological theories, were concerned that they might cause emotional damage to their children if they were strict. They were less sure of what was the "right" way to parent. Winn tells us that child rearing has evolved into a "psychoanalytic" process in which parents are constantly trying to "understand" why their children feel and behave as they do. This approach leads to a far more collaborative and permissive relationship with the child, thus further contributing to the meshing of child and adult.

Some permissiveness came about because parents who grew up during the depression and a major war, and had been reared by strict parents, wanted and could afford to give their children the kind of life they had never had. Copperman believes that these parents

> failed to differentiate adequately between their children's expressions of fundamental biological and emotional needs, and their egocentric, manipulative tendencies. By giving in to the demands of their children, these parents failed to establish the standards for behavior and responsibility that are essential to healthy social and psychological development. As a result, many children learned to manipulate their parents . . . and to circumvent parental restrictions and limits on behavior.[50]

Armbruster maintains that these children were deprived of a structured existence and the civilizing influence of proper behavior taught by adults in positions of authority.[9]

Ironically, while childhood has been shortened, adolescence has been extended. Because of the increased postwar affluence and parental indulgence, many youngsters have not had to work to survive, nor have they had to accept responsibility or to develop independence. The increased free time was spent with peers, which reinforced juvenile tendencies.

Other Factors

Winn and others believe that the growing divorce rate and the growing number of single-parent homes,* cause many parents to be more concerned with their own problems than with those of their children. They rely on their children to provide consolation for their unhappiness and become a "buddy" to them. The increasing number of working mothers has acted to further reduce the amount of time children spend with their parents. Winn believes that, whereas society previously presented unsupervised children with fewer hazardous choices, in today's more complex, permissive society, unsupervised children must now grow up faster to survive.[283]

Another reason for the change in relationship between adults and youth has been the worship of youth in this country. Sewell cites Charles Reich's *Greening of America*, published in 1970, as a book symptomatic of the times, for it counseled that "happiness lay in the imitation of youth." Sewell maintains that trend-conscious adults copied the hedonistic actions of privileged youth and that the real revolution of the late Sixties and early Seventies was not political or economic, but cultural.[228]

Finally, a survey by Daniel Yankelovich indicates that parents are now less altruistic: 66 percent feel they "should be free to live their own lives even if it means spending less time with their children." A substantial majority feel that they are entitled to live well, "even if it means leaving less to the children."[113]

Effects

Authorities have attested to the importance of play and the links between play and cognitive growth, language acquisition, problem solving, and socialization. With a shortened period of childhood in which (research shows) children are playing less, the implications for student learning become apparent.[172]

Shortened childhood has also resulted in a tremendous increase in juvenile crime, drug usage, teenage pregnancy, and venereal disease. A recent study comparing teenagers in the early 1960s with those in the late 1970s shows that they felt worse about themselves, were less able to take criticism without resentment, were more likely to get violent if they didn't get their way, felt emotional emptiness and a loss of trust, and were more likely to take an adversarial posture toward their families.[113]

Finally, citing the *Daedalus* comparison of influences on adolescents in 1960 and 1980, Sewell observes that parents, teachers, clergy, youth leaders, and relatives lost influence with the young, while friends, electronic media, popular heroes, print media, and advertising gained influence.[228] Winn notes that although youngsters previously "were required to maintain a certain deferential demeanor," today's kids are definitely less intimidated by adults. Also,

> Some of children's newly disrespectful attitude towards their teachers reflects a change in teachers' own attitude towards authority. . . . The knowledge that the teacher may be wrong so deliberately imparted to children by conscientious teachers today . . . may cause the child to consider the teacher "just another one of the kids"—as unreliable and untrustworthy as he knows himself to be at his own stage of development.[283]

The Growth of Egalitarianism and Its Effects

One other phenomenon of the period which could have had an impact on student achievement was that of the changing definition of equality: whereas once we sought to eliminate obstacles to mobility by inducing a better balance among social efficiency, individual liberty, and human equality so that talent, energy, and excellence would be more fairly rewarded, there is now a demand for absolute equality.[228] We are faced with the contrasting goals of equal opportunity and equal results.

Ravitch believes that the growth of egalitarianism resulted from a strong suspicion that those in control of American institutions could not be trusted to treat minorities, women, or any other aggrieved group fairly.

---

*T. H. White tells us that in 1970, 11 percent of all families were headed by a single parent; by 1978, 22 percent of all children under 18 were growing up in such homes. For blacks the numbers are larger: in 1960, 31 percent; by 1978, 56 percent. White also notes that the out-of-wedlock birthrates of both blacks and whites are increasing, and presumes that many of these children will be raised in single-parent homes.[277]

> The idea that schools and universities provided equal opportunity for all American youth to improve themselves and succeed on the basis of individual abilities without regard to their origin was scorned. . . .[204]

Whatever the reasons, Freeman points to the results:

> The egalitarian trend which resents and penalizes excellence, hard work and success and aims at equalization, characterizes philosophical attitudes which have been in ascendancy for several decades and have been carried out in many forms of legislation, regulation, and practices. Erosion of standards is not limited to schools. . . . Objective measurements of human capacities are anathema to the egalitarian principle . . . which has come to dominate not only our schools but our whole society.[100]

Adelson tells us that in recent years the "idea of merit could not survive, at least not the belief that native gifts cultivated by learning and effort would produce achievement and reward, the fruits of which would ultimately add to the common good."[2] He notes that a moral and intellectual ambiance was established in which striving, self-discipline, and the intellectual life itself became devalued. We must understand such forces because they have great impact on education. Without this perspective changes in our school systems would be well-nigh incomprehensible; for there has been as much "social engineering" as educating taking place.[9]

The Governance Shift: Local to State and Federal; Lay to Professional

The past several years have seen substantial interference with local control over the educational process. Local boards of education lost power and administrators lost autonomy because of an avalanche of governmental regulations, court decisions, and actions by special interest groups. These changes are all the more remarkable in light of the tradition of strong local control which has thwarted intervention by the courts and the federal government, and in light of historic congressional refusal to grant federal aid to education. But all of that changed in the mid-Sixties.[204] Congress, through its appropriations and threats to withhold funds, and the courts, through increased rulings and the real or perceived threat of litigation, caused unprecedented changes in the control of education in America.[265, 284]

Increased Federal Role

The number of federal regulations concerning education increased from 92 in 1965 to nearly 1000 in 1977.[204] The 88th Congress passed 24 major pieces of education legislation covering: vocational and technical education, handicapped children, prevention of juvenile delinquency, student counseling, schools in federal target areas, educational media, materials, research and curriculum, adult basic education, learning opportunities for disadvantaged children, state departments of education, poor students, desegregation, and equal educational opportunities.[110]

Before the 1960s, most federal aid was extended through grants of land, monetary grants, or technical assistance, which were intended to help the states and local communities accomplish *their* objectives, and were, therefore, monitored loosely. In contrast, the new federal involvement was designed to enable the federal government to achieve *its* purposes, which required closer federal control.[55]

One school of thought suggests that control shifted to the federal level out of a recognition that problems of the mid-20th century were no longer local. Another school of thought maintains that many government officials and education authorities were so intent on using the power of public policy to achieve dramatic social changes that they deliberately invoked the coercive capabilities of federal laws and court decisions.[55, 228] As there is no doubt that many local and state governments failed to meet their social responsibilities, so there is also no question that the federal government's effort to meet its perceived social responsibilities led federal intervention to exceed reason.

For example, federal funds expanded and strengthened state education departments, while at the same time the Experimental Schools Program, for which Congress appropriated $12 million in 1971 deliberately bypassed the state level in order to minimize states' influence.[55, 110] As Goodlad notes, state departments have in many ways evolved into effective conduits of federal intervention. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has distributed more than $30 billion. It provided new machinery and equipment to overcome student "deficiencies" and improve student welfare, and swelled the ranks of specialists, aides, diagnosticians, and psychologists, but it did not improve the quality of teachers and curricula—despite the fact that many district-level educators would have preferred funding for teachers' salaries, for construction to ease overcrowding, and for curricular improvement.[228] Goodlad also gives an example of a federal grant to enrich vocational offerings to a school that did not need such aid. He implies that other schools are the recipients of well-intentioned federal and state funds that reinforce apparent excesses and miss other needs crying for attention.[110]

Bilingual education is a good example of the confusion caused by federal intervention. In 1968, Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of ESEA) to develop and carry out school programs for children with limited English proficiency. Whether the purpose of such education was to provide extra help to youngsters until their fluency increased sufficiently, or to avoid the "melting pot" by supporting a bicultural approach, was never clear. In 1974, the Supreme Court in *Lau vs. Michals* ruled that districts must provide special instruction for those students unable to speak English, but did not mandate a bilingual system. The Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) subsequently prescribed the use of the "home language" in school for students for whom English was a second language. HEW warned that if schools made provisions other than those HEW recommended the schools risked having all of their federal funding cut off. By 1977, a total of 227 school districts were ruled in noncompliance and ordered to submit corrective plans.[228] Finally, when Congress renewed the Bilingual Education Act in 1974, it dictated for the first time a specific pedagogical approach to local schools.[204]

A final example of the complications caused by federal usurpation of local and state authority is found in two federal laws passed in 1973 and 1975 for the education of the handicapped. Definitions of "school responsibility" and the "handicapped" were almost boundless.[228] The mandated "main-streaming" entailed alterations to buildings, required specialists (sometimes one per pupil), special teacher-training programs, and parental agreement on an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for every disabled student. These IEPs were available not only to the physically and mentally handicapped, but also to others. Four million IEPs were written in 1978-79. All of this aid is very expensive. Yet, the federal government has not fulfilled its promise to pay for what it mandated, resulting in school districts having to compromise other programs in order to comply with federal requirements.[228]

The Courts

To add to the unprecedented involvement of the federal government in local school governance, the courts made it clear that virtually every aspect of education was subject to their jurisdiction.

> . . . the number of federal court decisions affecting education numbering only 112 between 1946 and 1956, rose to 729 from 1956 to 1966, and climbed to "in excess of 1200 in the next four years." There seemed to be no educational issue outside the courts' purview. In 1975, the Supreme Court ruled that a student could not be suspended from a public school in Ohio for even a single day without a hearing; the dissenting minority complained for the first time "the federal courts, rather than educational officials and state legislatures" had assumed "the authority to determine the rules applicable to routine classroom discipline of children and teenagers."[204]

While it is difficult to separate court rulings from federal legislation in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the best-known effect of court action of the period was "forced busing." Because many districts adamantly refused to obey the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown-vs.-The Topeka Board of Education*, which ruled that segregated schools would no longer be allowed, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed to allow suits to be brought against these noncomplying school districts. Subsequently, attention turned to de facto segregation in Northern districts, and federal courts began insisting on numerical evidence that racial balancing was proceeding. But the Supreme Court had not provided clear definitions of "segregation" and "integration". Conflict arose between the HEW guidelines requiring actual proof of racial mixing and a 1955 interpretation of the *Brown* decision by a three-judge federal court in South Carolina, which held that the Supreme Court had not required integration, but rather had forbidden discrimination. In 1965, in its *Singleton* and *Jefferson* decisions, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the HEW guidelines and interpreted *Brown* to require not only the cessation of separating children on the basis of race, but also that districts mix children of different races.

By 1982, an estimated 1.5 million school children were being bused for purposes of integration (compared with the 19 million for whom distance from school necessitated transportation). More than half of the nation's largest school systems were operating under federal or state court orders, and 1200 others had created "voluntary" plans to satisfy federal authorities. Public reaction included "white flight," increased enrollment in inner-city private schools, and dramatically changed urban communities. Although court orders had been based in part on social science findings, social scientists now disagreed about whether busing and desegregation enhanced either the educational achievement or self-esteem of minorities.[204, 228]

Another example of the far-reaching impact of court rulings is *Tinker vs. Des Moines*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that students do not shed their constitutional rights at the classroom door. What followed was a series of court cases, challenges to school authority, elaborate school board policies, codes and procedures detailing student rights, and a reluctance to require dress codes or enforce discipline for fear of a lawsuit against the teacher, principal, superintendent, school board, or all of them.

> . . . Students in many kinds of communities contested the authority of school administrations to restrict dress and forms of expression and pressed for changes in school regulations and curriculum. Lawyers supported by federal legal aid grants took many school districts to court for violation of students' constitutional rights.[55]

Sewell believes many people underestimated the impact of the expansion of student rights on school climate.

> Just as public schools inherited new and onerous burdens to create a more equal and just society, their authority to enforce strict standards of student conduct was in part removed. This situation dramatically altered the psychological reality in which educators and students interacted. It stimulated an adversarial relationship between apprehensive adults and empowered children, in which legal mechanisms replaced customary ways of settling intergenerational conflicts. The public school climate necessarily became more tense, formal and litigious.[228]

As Goodlad says, "Even a slight accident on a field trip could trigger a law suit."[110] Court decisions greatly influenced the operation of schools. Robert Wood, former Boston School Superintendent, complained that, at one point, he was complying with more than 200 separate court orders, contending with a legal bill of $700,000, and coping with the never-ending worry about the will of the federal court—a situation that undermined his credibility. And Donald Davies concludes that legal challenges worked against local control of schools because local decision-making gave way to "procedures and programs enforced by the courts."[55]

Increased State Involvement

During this period, the states joined the federal government and the courts in increasing their control of education, partly because the courts began to require that state governments meet their historically-imposed responsibility for education, including equity funding. States also responded to a disgruntled public that wanted the schools made more "accountable." Yet, state legislatures became more vulnerable to lobbying by the same groups that caused the public to demand more accountability in the first place. And, according to Goodlad:

> The nature and quantity of bills pertaining to schooling introduced into state legislatures—often several hundred a year—boggle the mind. It has been common, for example, for the California legislature to introduce in a single year over 500 bills related to public education and to pass a fifth of these. The California Education Code in effect in 1980 required 42 pages to set forth all the mandates related to bilingual education. It used only two pages to list the subjects to be taught in elementary and secondary classrooms. No doubt the volume and variety of state legislative activity has contributed to obfuscating the central educational charge not only to local school districts but to the states' own departments of education as well.[110]

Goodlad also laments the accumulation of piecemeal legislation that do not take into account existing requirements in the education code. He maintains that many legislators are virtually ignorant of the impact of new bills on the local schools.

> Principals and teachers often are caught in a paralytic inertia created by the bombardment of changing and often conflicting expectations.[110]

Some contend that the reason for the shift of educational power and decision-making from local to state levels is financial.

> With schooling costs rising at double the rate of the gross national product, dramatic variations in different school districts' ability to raise taxes, the public's disenchantment as expressed in the failure of bond issue elections, and the overloading of the property tax as the basis for school finance, the states have been forced to take an ever greater role.[265]

Also, only about 25% of American families now have children in school. Therefore, communities are not as supportive of local funding as they once were. This leads many to believe that the states should provide 50 percent of school revenues.

In response to the many reports calling for reform, and to the public demand for accountability—which was apparently not sufficiently met at the local level—governors, state legislatures and state school boards began to set new or more stringent standards for testing, student achievement, graduation requirements, course offerings, and teacher quality.

Special Interest Groups

Reacting to perceived unresponsiveness to their needs, and recognizing that governmental agencies could be more easily influenced than local boards, special interests groups worked to become more powerful. The validity of their needs aside, these groups learned the process of bypassing local (and state) boards by utilizing initiatives and referendums, and by making their case directly to congressional committees—many of which were not only more sympathetic to the cause, but certainly more removed from objections to their demands, and from results of additional federal mandates. Once relationships with congressional representatives and state legislators were established

> . . . interest groups were able to dominate hearings on issues that concerned them and to have considerable influence when new legislation was under consideration or when new regulations were drafted.[204]

Representatives of these groups stood ready with all kinds of assistance and with expert testimony at legislative hearings. If they were dissatisfied with the outcome, they retaliated in the press and in the courts. Lost in the process, in addition to local autonomy and flexibility, was a concern for the total picture. Each interest group lobbied for only its own concerns and competed with similar groups for attention and dollars.

Teacher Unions

Since 1960, teacher organizations have undergone tremendous growth and dramatic change; they have become more politically active, and are consequently responsible for a significant change in educational governance. They have disrupted the traditional lay control of school boards while simultaneously diminishing the authority of administrators. The NEA reversed its earlier position and began to support collective bargaining, including sanctions against school districts, and strikes. In addition

> . . . the NEA's state education association affiliates have been highly successful in influencing state legislatures and state boards and departments of education. It's at this level that teachers have won significant victories and exerted crucial leverage. The victories include, among others, the passage of tenure and collective-bargaining acts . . .[266]

The NEA has polarized the decision-making process in the public school system from the national to the local level.

Collective bargaining is a new development in American education. "In 1960 there was not a single collective bargaining contract in existence for teachers in public education."[100] Currently, only 20 percent of workers in the private sector belong to labor unions; 9 out of 10 teachers do, and 60 percent of them are covered by collective bargaining agreements. Many school boards have not understood how to negotiate with a union. If the board takes a strong stand, the teachers rail against them, proselytize the students, rally public support, and mark board members for defeat in the next election. The resultant adversarial relationship hampers learning. Communities are not aware that union demands go beyond wages and benefits into the policy-making realm. They do not realize that many boards bargain away their right to manage the schools, and thence their ability to represent the community.

Division of the Education Coalition

Goodlad notes that the coalition that traditionally supported public education was largely dissolved by the 1970s. No longer did its members share the same goals:

> . . . educators themselves became badly divided. The manner in which collective bargaining evolved set administrators against teachers. Superintendents' efforts to build an undivided administrative team frequently separated principals from their teachers. . . . There is an enormous schism, often verging on distrust, between those who run the schools and those in universities who study the schools. Education is a badly segmented profession.[110]

School boards and teacher unions battled federal agencies, and state education departments meddled in local administration.

However, college-level educationists remained virtually undisturbed. Only recently, because of public clamor to improve teacher education, has their authority to determine course requirements for education majors been challenged. Several colleges and universities have even abolished their colleges of education. The establishment of teacher competency tests results, of course, from the failure of certification and accreditation to fulfill the function for which they were established—to protect the public from poorly prepared teachers. Although state boards of education have the authority to set requirements for teacher certification and program accreditation, as Koerner observed 20 years ago:

> The institutions are by no means hamstrung, as they sometimes claim, by state certification or by accreditation requirements, which they themselves have much to do with formulating.[148]

He has labeled the accrediting-training-licensing apparatus "exceedingly unreliable" because

> [It] . . . is a bureaucratic system of counting credits that does not discriminate between the mediocre and the talented individual or between the first-rate and fourth-rate preparing institution.[148]

Some educators contend that, even when state departments improve the quality of teacher training, results are hardly discernible because declining enrollments prevent many new teachers trained according to these more stringent requirements from being placed in classrooms.

Part of the dissention within the education profession stems from teacher (especially secondary-teacher) disdain for and criticism of the "Mickey Mouse" courses they are forced to take. Koerner says:

> The body of respectable intellectual theory in teacher training is painfully thin and . . . taught by people who have not themselves taught in a public school for twenty or thirty years if ever.[148]

In all fairness, responsibility for inadequate preparation in content fields must be shared with the liberal arts colleges, because subject-matter courses are controlled and taught by those colleges. And, in all fairness, teachers should certainly receive some methodology training: results of valid educational research, and proven teaching techniques should be explained to them. But even these minimum needs have been poorly met by many educational methods courses.

Result: An Unresponsive Bureaucracy

The "turf protection" resulting from the break-up of the education coalition, exacerbated by the growth of teachers' unions and other special interest groups, coupled with unprecedented federal control and increased state involvement, caused local districts to become more bureaucratic.

Two other factors were critical in empowering this bureaucracy: first, fewer and fewer lay people were involved effectively in educational decision-making, as consolidations of smaller schools resulted in larger school districts with only one-eighth as many lay board members. Second, elected local boards of education for increasingly complex institutions were no longer a match for professional administrators and unionized teachers. Davies explains why the bureaucratic model is not a good one for education:

> . . . the bureaucratic organizational model as it has developed over time, works against educational quality and effectiveness. Bureaucracy and professionalism are like oil and water; they don't mix. One is based on hierarchical authority, the other on the authority of expertise. . . . The upshot . . . is that whereas school systems a hundred years ago were to a large extent instruments for *carrying out* community will, they are increasingly becoming instruments for *closing out* community will. . . .[55]

This results in a growing feeling of alienation on the part of parents and community. The word "unresponsive" is heard more and more as parents and teachers disagree about various aspects of schooling. Armbruster maintains that many educators do not welcome parental involvement in their children's education, and cites Gallup Polls to show that parents and teachers (or the educational establishment) differ.[9] As proof of the profession's "untouchableness," Koerner shows that where parents and teachers do differ, the position of the educators most often prevails,[148] and in another work says that

> . . . the Establishment has, like bureaucratic orthodoxies everywhere, an extremely low tolerance for basic dissent either inside or outside its ranks.[148]

The Result of All Three Shifts: A Loss of Authority

The major effect of the forces discussed has been a loss of authority—by school boards, superintendents, principals, and teachers—a loss of autonomy of school districts. But authority is necessary if we are to transmit literacy skills to the young.

> Virtually every significant educational problem of the decade 1968-1978 resulted directly from the abrogation or subversion of normal educational authority.[50]

Gerald Grant of Syracuse University says:

> Unsavory institutional, community, and legal forces are cutting at the public school's ability to exercise authority as a moral agency. [Schools have been altered by] (1) *dispersed authority*, which results when new legions of educational specialists, technicians, counselors, and aides issue conflicting commands from a variety of relatively independent school offices, each group all the while engaged in status competition with the other groups within the school; (2) *leveled authority*, in which traditional adult freedoms have been radically circumscribed and juvenile rights vastly expanded; and (3) *codified authority*, highly legalistic, rational, and technical in nature, whereby most questions of character, value, and desirable conduct have been ruled out of institutional bounds.[228]

The Impact of the Philosophical Shift

Goodlad believes that, beyond the very first years of schooling, most students do not voluntarily discipline themselves or learn without the imposition of external controls. Establishing control is necessary for teaching and learning to occur.[110] Much of this control stems from the power of knowledge—the teacher's command of the subject matter. However, in some forms of progressive education, students have been encouraged to believe that factual knowledge is not particularly important or relevant. This attitude undermines the authority of a teacher trying to transmit such knowledge.[9] Moreover, as a result of the deemphasis on content, many teachers do not gain the necessary knowledge to transmit to their students.

Copperman delineates other features of progressive education that weaken authority. Grade inflation ostensibly prevents failure and damage to student self-esteem, but the "authority to impose standards is integral to the process of education." The nurturing function has been overemphasized to the detriment of the training function, and teachers have sacrificed their authority. The advocacy of democratic relationships between students and teachers presumes that students possess the maturity to make choices; but students should not be confused with adults who make choices as responsible and independent individuals and *accept the consequences* of their actions. Certain choices simply should not be offered to students—for example, a choice between English composition and "film literature." To permit such choices amounts to an abrogation of adult responsibility and further dissipates authority.[50]

The Impact of the Societal Shift

It is difficult to assess the impact of the societal upheaval on the loss of school authority since many of the changes could also be attributed to the philosophical or governance shift. However,

> The extraordinary stress in the society outside the schools had created nearly intolerable strains within many schools in terms of student resistance to traditional authority. As authority in the larger society eroded, authority in the schools also came under attack; discipline problems increased, as did truancy and vandalism.[204]

Some supported student resistance to educational authority.[50] Others attempted to appease the students by easing academic requirements. Still others hesitated to exercise too much control over children because they had become convinced that their decisions might be not only wrong, but also damaging.[228] It is clear that innovations increased and school discipline weakened.

The Impact of the Governance Shift

The myriad of state and federal laws and court decisions lessened the authority of principals and central office administrators.

Adelson tells us that superintendents sometimes wrested authority from principals to compensate for their own loss of authority and to enable them to meet actual and projected demands of other groups and institutions. He also says that many principals, faced with a multitude of conflicting pressures, retreated to bureaucratic authority, "avoiding decisions and commitments until the proper rules [could] be found, cited and applied." This paralysis of authority was transmitted to teachers, students, and others throughout the system.[2] A corrosive distrust was engendered when outsiders intervened presuming that local officials could not be trusted to do the right thing. J. Myron Atkin, Dean of the School of Education at Stanford, warned that

> . . . local school administrators and teachers are losing control over the curriculum as a result of government action. . . . In this process, the local administrator becomes less of an educational leader and more of a monitor of legislative intent. . . . Each new effort to impose reform on the school . . . simply undermined the schools autonomy and effectiveness.[204]

As has been stated, lay boards also lost authority. They were overwhelmed by administrators who became increasingly professional, by unions that became increasingly skillful and persistent in negotiations, and by a mountain of state and federal regulations.

Goodlad acknowledges that local school systems have been "shoved—this way and that because of federal laws, interests and funds."[110] And Ravitch summarizes:

> Much has been gained because of the active dedication of the federal government and the courts to the rights of all children. To the extent that the pursuit of good ends jeopardized equally valuable ends, like academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and diversity; to the extent that absorption by educators in bureaucratic procedures overshadowed the educational function of the schools; and to the extent that government programs gave new responsibilities to academic institutions while depriving them of the authority needed to carry out those responsibilities, there remained a compelling agenda for future educational reformers.[204]

Can We Hold the Schools Responsible?

Considering all the changes affecting education that have been discussed in this report, can we hold the schools responsible for the decline in achievement and for reduced literacy skills? Acknowledging that there are many factors that can and do impede learning, the problem is that:

> There is little or no acknowledgment that the educational system itself may also be at fault. Yet we are entitled at least to ask: Does this historically unparalleled decline in student skills have anything to do with the curriculum dilution for which, in the final analysis, the educational establishment itself is responsible? For example, the reduction of the number of academic classes. For example, the weakening of graduation requirements, or, to use another term, social promotion rather than promotion based on achievement. For example, the inflation of grades. For example, the emphasis on electives that demand little or nothing from the student. For example, the growing prejudice of the educational establishment against the high achiever. . . . And, underlying all these, the apparent lack of success for whatever reason, in teaching the basic skills during the first 6 to 8 years of the student's schooling.[85]

Clifton Fadiman made these remarks in 1976. Yet, it was not until the President's commission made its report, "A Nation at Risk," that the question was addressed nationally. In all fairness, many members of the "educational establishment," while not exactly welcoming the report, admitted that some issues needed to be discussed. Indeed, some had already begun to make changes. However, many others continued to resist such an indictment, insisting that the fault did not lie with the educational establishment or the schools.

In assessing the educationists' defense, Koerner agrees that too much television, the break-up of families, an increasingly permissive society, the prevalance of indulgent parents, the weakened civilizing standards in our culture, and the general volatility of modern society are factors to be considered and addressed. But, he concludes:

> All these baleful influences are no doubt at work and deserve to be acknowledged. But I suggest that their effect is marginal and not to be compared to that of the school itself. Educators often assert that judging the performance of the public schools is an extremely complex problem in which all kinds of social, economic, political, cultural and psychological factors must be taken into account. I am tempted to respond . . . that one should not search for complicated explanations for a problem when a simple explanation will do . . . I conclude [that academic standards] are in decline because teachers and administrators are doing a poor job. If they were doing the job the public rightly expects of them, we would be seeing not a decline in student achievement but a steady improvement.[148]

Armbruster adds that during other periods when constraints were loosened, the schools have upheld their standards and "maintained their positions as islands of scholastic and civilized environment," regardless of what was happening in society. He adds that available data show that the attitudes of the majority of parents about their children's schooling have not changed much in the last twenty years.

> Changed family attitudes and home environment thus seem inadequate explanations for the achievement decline, particularly considering the rapid drop in achievement of whole state peer groups, upper percentile brackets, and in northern, smaller city, suburban and rural districts.[9]

In assessing the culpability of the colleges and universities, Ravitch declares that although federal regulation was costly and increased bureaucracy, the institutions were able to preserve the right "to decide for themselves, on academic terms, who would teach, what would be taught, how it would be taught, and who would be admitted to study."[204]

As for the teachers, Ravitch believes that they have retained their considerable control over what and how they teach, regardless of what instructions or recommendations they receive from superiors. Goodlad concurs. The most frequent response to his question, "How much control do you have overall in how you carry out your own job?" was "a lot."

> The classroom is indeed the teacher's domain, and here, according to our data, teachers perceive themselves to be in control of what they taught and how. Beyond their own preparation and experience, as well as students' interests, all other influences were seen as relatively insignificant.[110]

Copperman concludes:

> There is nothing in any of the [research I have reviewed] to lead one to believe that a deterioration in the quality and quantity of schooling will not lead directly to a decline in academic achievement. . . .
>
> The most likely explanation for the achievement decline . . . is a reduction in the quantity and quality of education provided to America's young people over the past dozen years.[50]

Michigan State professor Ron Edmonds and his Harvard colleagues claimed that it is not the family background but rather the school's response to that background which determines pupil performance. They were able to determine which institutional characteristics made a difference in educational quality, and concluded that these characteristics can be controlled in schools.

The characteristics they identified include: a strong principal who is actively involved in improving instruction; a staff that agrees on what should be happening in the school; consistency in communicated expectations; a system for monitoring and assessing pupil performance; and the willingness to make changes if it is determined that what is being taught is not working. *These characteristics have been absent in many of our schools.*

Other research clearly shows that schools do have an effect on children's learning, and that what goes on at school matters a great deal. In *Fifteen Thousand Hours*, Michael Rutter reports that students from the same kinds of backgrounds produced different results and that those differences could be attributed, in part, to factors that educators can control. This research showed a .76 correlation between overall school process and academic attainment, and a .92 correlation with student behavior.[221]

A recent investigation by the *Dallas Times Herald* also focused on what makes classrooms succeed even when the odds seem against them:

> . . . A heavy emphasis on phonics, especially the phonic-based reading program DISTAR, was found.
>
> There was a heavy emphasis on choral reading, on repetition, especially when children hesitated or answered incorrectly. Teachers constantly praised students to reinforce their achievements; the classrooms were highly structured with seats usually in traditional rows; strict discipline was maintained. . . . Most important, the teachers had high expectations for their students.
>
> Teachers who had large numbers of children with a limited English-speaking ability made few allowances for any language handicap. Instead, during the teaching of English reading, they treated the children as though they were fluent in English.
>
> Also, most of the schools in the study used Kindergarten as more than a readiness year, teaching as many children to read as possible. At Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School in Dallas, for example, at least 50 percent of the kindergarteners learn to read. At Houston's McDade Elementary School, 60 percent of the kindergarten pupils are reading by the beginning of the second semester.[212]

Armbruster also argues that examination of achievement score data does not support the premise that the drop in academic achievement is solely (or even primarily) the result of factors outside of the school. He cites instances of SAT scores from affluent schools dropping faster than the national average, and those from deprived areas slipping less than those from better areas within the same state and the same school system. He emphasizes that, in general, children's average academic achievement scores do not begin to fall until 4th or 5th grade, then fall suddenly at all socioeconomic levels. Given that the same exterior factors exist in the early grades as in the later grades, why is achievement not affected until after the 3rd or 4th grade?[10]

A recent editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* states bluntly what many have been saying quietly or thinking.

> There was a point, about five years ago, when one could have said that the failure reflected in test scores was the result of an honest mistake made by well-intentioned educators with new ideas. . . . We don't think the people who "reformed" American education over the past 20 years should be allowed to so easily forget that well after the problem was recognized, tens of thousands of kids went over the falls and are now floating around in the workplace, in their 20s, making childlike errors in simple spelling, pronunciation, the reading of instructions and arithmetic. As a result, they're consigned to seeking moronic jobs and enduring personal humiliation.[279]

While many of the factors described in the three shifts discussed had a detrimental effect on student achievement, the changes in educational philosophy affected what was taught, and therefore what was learned, more than any other. The public has not interfered to any great extent with the educational establishment, and has had very little say in or control over the curriculum—as we have pointed out, teachers realize that they control what is taught in their classrooms, and how.

If we accept the premise that schools can, should, and do make a difference, then in order to reduce or eliminate illiteracy in the future, we need to look at the institution we charge with teaching literacy. We cannot continue business as usual in the face of these facts: 28 percent of students drop out of school before graduation; many of those drop-outs lack the literacy skills necessary to find employment; even students who receive diplomas often lack basic literacy skills; and an increasingly technological society will demand a higher level of literacy than that which we are unable now to achieve. Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it: we must review what happened, recognize the problems, and make the necessary changes.

A Review of Public School Achievement

In reviewing educational achievement, what pattern emerges? At the turn of the century, when the public school system was well established, immigrant children who were illiterate in their native language as well as in English, and taught by teachers who spoke only English, in classes where the pupil-teacher ratio was as high as 1:80, managed to become literate. The truancy rate in 1900 was 8 percent, compared to 16.5 percent in the late 1970s. From 1890 to 1930 the illiteracy rate dropped from 6.2 to 1.6 percent among native-born whites. Although achievement data are sketchy, Armbruster surmises that achievement scores declined between the immigrant period and the mid-1920s, rapidly increased until the late 1930s, gradually decreased again until the early 1950s, and finally increased—most sharply in the post-Sputnik era of the late 1950s and early 1960s—until the present decline began in 1963. As the number of students being retained in various grades declined, and the proportion of school-age children graduating from high school increased (from 6 percent in 1900 to 60 percent in the 1950s) during the post-Sputnik era, the educational system maintained its standards and improved the academic achievement of its students.

When the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act which was designed to improve the scientific education of our most talented students. By providing additional challenge to bright students, educational standards were raised for all students and achievement increased. From 1952 to 1963, the number of students taking the SAT rose from 7 to 30 percent, and the high school drop-out rate declined from 40 to 30 percent. Even though the test-taking population was larger, achievement was either maintained or improved.[50]

The SAT

In 1963, test scores began dropping. SAT math scores dropped from 502 in 1963 to 466 in 1980-81, and verbal scores dropped from 478 to 424. Scores for girls dropped more steeply than those for boys. By 1980, the average math scores were 491 for boys and 443 for girls; the average verbal scores were 428 for boys and 420 for girls. Boys had long outperformed girls in math, but until 1972, girls had higher verbal scores. Boys have out-performed girls in both scores every year from 1972 to 1980. According to Ravitch:

> The first reaction to the score drops was to attribute them to the fact that large numbers of minorities, females, and low-income students joined the college-bound pool during this time of expansion. But in fact the composition of the test-takers has been fairly stable since 1970, and the score drops have been even more extensive since then. It is more telling that the number and proportion of high-scoring students have fallen precipitously; the number of seniors who scored over 650 fell from 53,800 (5.3 percent) in 1972 to 29,000 in 1980 (2.9 percent). The shrinkage of the top scorers has proceeded steadily since the mid-1960s, and obviously is unrelated to the overall composition of the test-taking group.[203]

According to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) the decline is even worse. ETS discovered a "scoring drift," which meant that the decline in both verbal and math areas on the SAT between 1963 and 1977 was 8-12 points greater than reported.

The 1977 report of the Advisory Panel on the Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline, a subgroup of the College Entrance Examination Board, analyzed this decline. A summary of that analysis by Dr. Karen Scheid of the State of Ohio Department of Education is condensed here:

1. The peak year for both the SAT verbal and math scores was 1962-63. Decline began the following year.
2. Decline was not due to changes in the test or the method by which it was administered.
3. The report discussed two periods of decline:
    - During the first 6 or 7 years of decline the composition of the SAT-taking population was changing markedly. Each year it included larger numbers of characteristically lower-scoring groups.
    - After 1970, across-the-board decline occurred, affecting higher- and lower-scoring groups alike.
4. The major portion of the decline in the first period (before 1970) can be attributed to the following factors:
    a. In 1960, 55.4 percent of SAT takers came from the highest-scoring group of students on the Project Talent and the National Longitudinal Study reading tests; in 1972, 36.5 percent of SAT takers were in the same group.
    b. The proportion of test takers from three groups that have usually registered lower than average increased.
    c. Until 1967, most SAT takers attended relatively prestigious four-year liberal arts colleges and universities. In 1967, an increasing percentage began to attend less selective institutions with open admissions.
    d. There are average score differentials from 60 to 85 points between test takers who go to four-year colleges and those who go to two-year institutions, and between test takers who go directly from high school to college and those who do not. There were substantially larger percentages of these two lower scoring groups in the 1972 than in the 1960 test-taking populations.
    e. The number of repeat takers, who average 15 to 30 points higher, dropped.
    f. Calculations indicate that the changing composition of the test-taking population accounted for two-thirds to three-fourths of the score decline.
5. Reasons for the post-1970 decline include:
    a. Changes in the test-taking group became less important as a cause of score decline.
    b. The percentage of high-school students taking the SAT either stopped increasing or started to decline by 1970.
    c. An increase in the number of women (applicable to math scores) and in students intent on career majors (rather than liberal arts) accounts for some decline.
    d. The drop in students scoring 600 or better on either the verbal or math sections from 1970 to 1976 was caused by: 1) the reduction in the number of students taking the SAT, and 2) the other "pervasive influences" affecting test-taker scores.
    e. Comparatively little (20 to 30 percent) of the decline in scores during the second period appears attributable to compositional shifts of the test-taking population.
    f. The second-period decline has occurred among students in the higher and lower percentile of their high school class, regardless of public or private schooling; size of school; type of program; socioeconomic, racial, or ethnic background; gender; and plans for postgraduate work.
6. Most, but not all, standardized test score averages, which previously had been rising, gradually started down in the middle 1960s. In most cases there was a much sharper drop in the 1970s. Declines were greatest at the

12th grade level and decrease at each successively lower grade level; averages at grades 1 to 4 have remained relatively constant.

7. Declines in PSAT scores were substantially smaller than SAT declines between 1963 and 1973. Since 1973, PSAT verbal and math scores have dropped in parallel with SAT declines.
8. Comparisons of student scores on optional achievement tests taken in conjunction with the SAT tend to deviate from the general decline pattern. Use of these tests has declined sharply in the four- or five-year period preceding the Advisory Panel's study, and relatively few students take the tests.
9. The Advisory Panel noted major factors it believes contributed to the decline:
   a. More elective courses were offered in schools in the 1970s.
   b. Educational standards appear to be lower now than before.

The Advisory Panel concludes that it may have given too little attention to the differences in patterns of decline on the verbal and math SAT—i.e., math scores have declined less than verbal scores. Fewer electives in math may contribute to this. But this verbal-math discrepancy should be examined more closely.

10. In summary, the Advisory Panel concluded that two-thirds to three-fourths of the 1963-1970 decline and one-fourth of the post 1970 decline could be contributed to changing membership of the test-taking population. The rest of the decline, the panel believes, is due in large part to the following six factors:
    a. A significant dispersal of learning activities characterized by the addition of elective courses and reduction in the number of courses all students are expected to take.
    b. A decline in academic standards as reflected in grade inflation, automatic promotion, simplified textbooks, reduction of homework, and lowering of college admission standards.
    c. The increasing amount of time children spend learning through viewing and listening rather than through reading. In particular, the panel points to the time children spend watching television.
    d. Changing family structure—e.g., more single parent families, more working mothers.
    e. The disruptive environment of the late 60s and early 70s.
    f. The diminution of young people's learning motivation.

T. C. Venable, writing in *Phi Delta Kappan*, rejects the hypotheses that test score decline is due to the change in the test-taking population, that the SAT is an invalid predictor of college success, and that there is a lack of relationship between curriculum and what is measured on the SAT. Venable believes that the decline is a cause of grave concern and that hypotheses such as those offered by the Advisory Panel on the Scholastic Aptitude Test score decline should be investigated.[206]

Other Test Patterns

The American College Test (ACT) scores follow the pattern of the SAT, as does the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), whose average scores between 1965 and 1975 dropped 37 points on the verbal and 22 points on the math. Other tests verify this trend. For example:

> The Iowa Testing Program and the Minnesota Scholastic Aptitude Test show strikingly consistent patterns of rising achievement levels until the mid-1960s, then a steady decline which accelerates as students reach higher grades and which is particularly pronounced in verbal areas.[203]

A great deal has been said about the achievement scores of secondary students, but practically nothing about the performance of elementary students. Barbara Lerner cites a marked decline in cognitive achievement in elementary school that may rival that in high school. She also points out that higher retention rates cannot be considered a factor in the decline of elementary scores, because the proportion of students completing the 8th grade has remained essentially the same for the last 20 years.[155]

Copperman's research shows gains in academic achievement for grades 1-9 from 1958 to 1964, but declines in achievement for all but lst and 2nd grades from 1964 to 1973. He notes that most studies over that 15-year period show a substantial decline in grades 4 and higher. A renorming study of the 1964 and 1971 versions of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) shows this pattern, as does a renorming study of the 1965 and 1973 versions of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, published by McGraw-Hill. The ITBS study indicates that the achievement decline is as pronounced among high-ability students as among those of average ability.[50]

Armbruster points out that, on the ITBS, the scores of 90th-percentile students fell faster than those of 50th-percentile students and much faster than those of 10th-percentile students.[10] Copperman notes that trends in the private schools he studied parallel those in public schools; however, the average private school student still scored two years ahead of the average public school student.[50]

According to an analysis of tests administered to 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds since 1972 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the gap between the academic performance of America's lowest-achieving and highest-achieving students has narrowed over the past decade, but some of that gain has been at the expense of high achievement. In an article for *Compact*, Rexford Brown points out that NAEP is a continuing source of consistent data on literacy, and that it assesses a wide range of skills from "survival tasks" to complex reasoning and mathematical skills. For the sake of comparison, he divided the skills measured into low-level "basic" literacy and "higher-level" literacy, and discovered the following:

- Although 17-year-olds' lower-level reading skills do not appear to be declining, the higher-level skills are.
- There was no change throughout the '70s in the number of 17-year-olds correctly answering questions requiring literal comprehension, but disadvantaged nine and 13-year-olds gained ground.
- From 10 to 25 percent of students have serious problems with written English, that proportion remaining consistent for a decade.
- Only small percentages of students in the 1979 assessment produced good papers. Skill in writing a persuasive letter declined six points, so there is some evidence that higher-level writing skills are declining.
- Those with lower-level mathematical skills are neither gaining nor losing ground, but there is a critical need for attention to the higher-order cognitive skills.[35]

Brown concludes that those possessing the lower-level skills are holding their own; in fact, some groups of traditionally disadvantaged students are narrowing the gap between themselves and national averages in reading and writing. On a less positive note, he observes that the percentage of those having attained the higher-level skills is declining.[35]

Thus, the pattern that emerges shows that, in general, achievement improved gradually from 1900 to 1950, then more rapidly until the present decline began in the 1960s. Since then, the

> . . . reading-readiness skills of pre-school children have improved substantially; the academic skills of primary-grade students have increased slightly; the reading, writing, and computing skills of late-elementary and secondary students have deteriorated sharply.[50]

The decline in academic achievement is not restricted to economically-disadvantaged, low-ability students. The test-score decline for so many years disputed, ignored, and downplayed by educators is real. It reflects a substantial deterioration in achievement for most of the test-taking population. Copperman illustrates the significance of the achievement decline of secondary students between 1965 and 1979: to make achievement levels of 1979 and 1965 classes comparable, the top quarter of the 1965 class would have to be deleted and replaced by somewhat below-average students.[50]

Falling achievement, while affected by many factors, could have been avoided or lessened if professional educators had made different decisions. However, educators, conditioned by so many years of progressive educational philosophy, could not or did not withstand the pressure for even greater educational liberalization demanded as a result of the upheavals of the 60s and the onset of the permissive society. Therefore, schools underwent extensive organizational, curricular, and attitudinal changes—many of which contributed to the overall literacy decline. The smoldering resentment, frustration, and anger over this turn of educational events finally erupted in the spate of reports that fueled the current reform movement.

Our contribution to this movement concludes with the following discussion of possible solutions to the problems thus far presented.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTION OF THE PROBLEM

We have tried to present a thorough, if not exhaustive, discussion of the educational failures underlying illiteracy. The discussion forms the basis for the following recommendations and accompanying explanations. Some of the suggestions bear an obvious relationship to the attainment of literacy; others bear a more subtle one. Nonetheless, all affect the degree to which Americans will become literate.

In Response to the Philosophical Shift

Improve the Teaching of Reading

The teaching of reading is the most important responsibility of schools and should take priority over all else. "Reading" refers to all stages of literacy, from those requiring lower-level skills to those requiring the more complex skills identified by Chall.[45, 46]

It is not possible, of course, to acquire higher-level skills unless one has mastered decoding and word recognition. For years, controversy raged about whether these first stages of reading were best taught through phonics or the look-say method. Consensus has emerged among educational decision-makers to support a combination of methods with a strong phonics component. Some still maintain that because phonics is not emphasized enough, and teachers are not sufficiently trained in phonics instruction, many students have more reading problems than they need to have.

> . . . The review of field research in reading has suggested an advantage for code-oriented teaching roughly through the primary school years. This advantage is especially marked for children in compensatory programs. After the primary grades, there is no clear evidence supporting either code or language approaches to instruction . . .
>
> As a matter of routine practice, we need to include systematic, code-oriented instruction in the primary grades, no matter what else is also done. This is the only place in which we have any clear evidence for any particular practice . . . The charge . . . that too early or too much emphasis on the code depresses comprehension finds no support in the empirical data. On the other hand, neither is there support for a radical claim that once the code is well learned, other reading problems will disappear. Thus, there is no evidence that code-emphasis programs alone will "solve" the reading problem. What appears to be needed is systematic code teaching together with attention to language-processing (i.e., comprehension) aspects of reading.[213]

The other facets of the reading problem which need more open discussion, investigation, and public attention are:

- *The relationship of reading to verbal skills.* Is the ability to verbalize a necessary readiness skill? If so, do we know whether children are lacking in this skill? How does such a deficiency in verbalization affect the ability to read?
- *The importance of the interrelationship of other language skills to the improvement of reading.* Many experts maintain that an understanding of other language skills goes hand-in-glove with the ability to read and comprehend.

> . . . language skills are interrelated; it is verified by research and corroborated by experience in teaching. Correlational studies show the strong relationship of reading ability to listening, to oral language development, to the knowledge of grammatical terms, to the ability to manipulate syntactic structures, to breadth of vocabulary, to spelling, and to success in written composition.[57]

To what degree have we stopped teaching or deemphasized some of these skills? Have semester English courses and minicourses contributed to the problem? Have such courses and an overall lack of articulation been a factor in the decline of the more complex reading skills?

- *The impact of the lack of background information on the ability to progress through the various reading stages and the cyclical nature of that relationship.* It is difficult to read with understanding that which one knows nothing about, and one can't know about things he hasn't either read about or experienced (as noted in E.D. Hirsch, Jr.'s theory of "cultural literacy").[129]
- *The degree to which inadequate materials contribute to the problem.* We have established teachers' extensive reliance on published texts.

An analysis of the textbooks used over a 30-year period, requested by the SAT Advisory Panel, found compelling evidence that the level of difficulty of textbooks used by students was associated with their SAT scores:

> The harder the textbooks used from Grade 1 to 11, the higher the verbal SATs; the easier the textbooks, the lower the SAT scores. The level of challenge of the first-grade reading textbooks seemed to have a particularly strong association with the SAT scores.[45]

According to one expert, "Only the very gullible could believe that the limitation of the child's vocabulary could enlarge and stimulate his reading ability."[254]

- *The relationship of intelligence to the decline in reading scores beginning at Grade 4.* There seems to be a major break in the stages of reading at about Grade 4: pre-Grade 4 reading content seldom goes beyond what a student has experienced, but after Grade 4, this changes. Texts become more sophisticated, requiring more abstract thinking and cognitive skills. In addition to analyzing the difficulty of primary texts, we need to determine at what point(s) and to what degree(s) I.Q. becomes a factor.
- *The lack of monitoring and intervention.* Some schools do little or no testing, especially in the primary grades where failure in reading begins. So that we constantly hear of students being passed through the grades without learning to read. A recent article in *Learning* magazine points out that

  > something is seriously amiss in the area of reading instruction . . . older students have an extremely limited reading ability and founder when confronted with higher-level comprehensive questions.[169]

  All students must be evaluated regularly, and remediated when problems first occur.

  > We are confronted with a pervasive phenomenon. Conventional educational policy has not produced effective intervention on a mass scale.[286]

  Also, parents are entitled to know whether their children are reading as well as possible and how their child's reading skills compare with those of his or her peer group on local, state, and national levels.

We urge that reading test results, indeed the whole subject of reading instruction, receive *public* airing and objective examination. We do so because:

- Acquisition of beginning reading skills is crucial to progress in school and, ultimately, to adult literacy.
- As Chall points out, learning to decode requires direct instruction and "most children cannot generate their own rules of print to speech, and letters to sounds."[44]
- It would be tragic if something so simple as a change in teaching methods could eliminate many reading difficulties, and we did not make the changes.
- We are aware that the NAEP reported significant reading gains in the early grades due (at least in part) to more and earlier phonics instruction, especially for children from low-income and minority families.
- Elected school leaders are not well informed about the problem. We doubt that most state boards of education know how teachers are being trained, or that many local boards know what instructional methods are being used in their schools.

We also call upon the national leadership from the executive and legislative branches to accomplish the following:

- Determine and reveal how prospective elementary teachers and secondary reading teachers are actually taught to teach reading.
- Determine and reveal how elementary teachers and secondary reading teachers actually do teach reading.
- Analyze existing reading programs to identify which produce the most successful readers, and whether some programs are more cost-effective than others.
- Determine to what extent and why older students (grades 4-12) lack comprehension skills.

This national leadership must also establish a task force to thoroughly investigate illiteracy in the United States and publicize the task force's findings. This investigation should result in:

- A standard definition of literacy and illiteracy.
- The identification and analysis of the causes of illiteracy.
- The identification and analysis of programs and policies that contribute to increasing and decreasing the level of literacy in the United States.
- A design for, and implementation of, systematic data collection.
- An assessment of the extent of illiteracy in this country and its true cost to society.
- The recommendation of procedures designed to implement whatever changes are deemed necessary.

More strictly evaluate educational materials, and reassess the criteria or selection. Materials should be sufficiently challenging.

Students receive approximately 98 percent of their instruction from materials rather than from teachers.[150] Commercially published materials are used by teachers to structure nearly all instructional time in reading as well as many other school subjects. Consequently, schools are enormously dependent on the products of the educational publishing industry.

Yet only one cent of each educational dollar is spent on textbooks and other instructional materials.[74] Three areas should be scrutinized:

1. *The amount of money from school budgets for materials*: Funds for materials often suffer because of more pressing demands such as negotiated salaries and building repair. School boards should demand that a needs assessment be made and the necessary amount of money for materials be set aside.
2. *The symbiotic relationship between teachers and publishers*: Teachers help to write and select texts. But: "Teachers do not necessarily have the complex of skills required to develop outstanding materials, especially when they rely so heavily upon existing materials."[150] Moreover, the publisher's goal is to satisfy the teachers, not the students.
3. *The challenge presented to the student*: A recent study conducted by the Education Products Information Exchange Institute showed that 60 percent of the 4th graders in some school districts studied were able to achieve a score of 80 percent or higher on a test on the same level as their math texts—before they opened their books in September. Similar findings were reported with 4th- and 10th-grade science texts and in 10th-grade social studies texts.

In regard to the last items: researchers from the NIE-funded Center for Study of Reading (CSR) at the University of Illinois, arrived at two major conclusions, first:

> Reading textbooks for the primary grades are seriously deficient; they're just not doing the job of preparing children for the kinds of reading they will encounter from the fourth grade on; and what's more, they're turning many children off to the whole idea of reading; and there isn't enough real teaching of reading comprehension going on in American schools.[169]

Secondly, the stories are "readabilitized," resulting in:

- An absence of complex sentences in which a thought or opinion is attributed to someone . . . which leaves the reader either without the information or with a convoluted construction;
- Sentences without connectors like *so* and *because*, which ordinarily give children a sense of logical flow;
- Main and subordinate clauses chopped into individual sentences of equal status, which cause children to lose a sense of relationship;
- An absence of "hard" words that would make the stories vivid and explicit, and a substitution of "easy" words, like "thing" and "one," that are vague and unengaging.[169]

The CSR researchers note that there is:

> . . . strong evidence that young children are quite capable of handling more sophisticated reading material than they are getting now . . . that many students come out of the primary grades without the skills they need to cope with more difficult material—and without much enthusiasm for reading anything.[169]

The CSR researchers also recommend that textbook publishers be forced to produce better books. Moreover, school boards should be informed of the harm of adhering to readability formulas and content restrictions.

The emphasis is usually on primary materials because they are so crucial to future educational success, but elementary materials are by no means the only ones that need to be upgraded. Twenty years ago, authors James Lynch and Bertrand Evans warned about the way educational theories and sociological theories were affecting reading materials in English classes. They said that the practice of selecting literature based on "relevant" content:

- "[makes] adolescence a state rather than a stage, and [tends] to prolong immaturity"
- emphasizes topics—that is, reading for personal adjustment, rather than for literary quality
- results in an emphasis on making the literature attractive to students, rather than helping students become attracted to and learn to appreciate good literature
- diminishes the teacher's role, since most of these easier selections need only be assigned, not taught, thereby robbing the teacher of the chance to show students "how to read and appreciate something better"
- deprives students of "their last formal opportunity to improve their taste and literary judgment"

In sum:

> . . . certain prevalent but nonsensical equations that have long hampered English studies should be abolished: namely, that what is great is difficult; that what is difficult is uninteresting; that what is uninteresting is unteachable. Neither editors nor teachers should be afraid of giving students "what is good for them." If students knew what was good for them, they would need neither teachers nor textbooks. . . . The vapid theories that advocate teaching the "whole child," removing all difficulties from his path, and being permissive at every turn cannot be allowed to put in jeopardy the literacy of a whole nation.[84]

To limit the selection of literature to what the student finds relevant or meaningful is ridiculous.

> This would indeed be a frustration of the power of literature to carry us into new and broader realms. A steady diet of books about the students' own age group, their own minority or majority group, their own social or psychological problems, would probably result in the reading of the works simply as sociological or psychological documents.[219]

Fear of "turning the students off" is no reason to avoid more advanced literature. Students can master less complicated fiction on their own; the important thing is to give them the tools of literary analysis:

> The student . . . can discover that a strong emotional response to a book does not necessarily prove its literary merit He can learn not to accept shoddy writing and stereotyped characters. . . . He may become able to admire the masterly technique of an author yet question his view of man and the world . . . this is an essential part of growth in ability to read.[219]

Upgrade Curricula

The need to substantially upgrade curricula has been advocated in other reports. We heartily concur. Some states are responding; e.g. the New York State Board of Regents will require more fine arts, computer education, and foreign language proficiency of the class of 1991.[163] However, strengthening the curriculum will not be as easy as might be supposed, because the attitudes that caused the dilution of it in the first place still exist. For example, there is still a strong belief that our schools are the fastest avenue to social reform, and there is still

> . . . a lack of faith that the goals of civil rights and social equity can be served by the study of history, English, the sciences, and foreign languages.[159]

But as Judith Segal and Edwin Delattre tell us:

> Organizing school programs to foster social reform creates the erroneous idea that a "quick fix" for social problems is available through the schools. It also undermines the kind of intellectual preparation necessary for making conscientious and informed judgments about personal well-being and social policy.
>
> Replacement of history with "social studies," for example, deprives students of a grasp of the political, military, and economic events that have shaped our world. . . . The loss of a chronological grasp, of a sense of cultural development, limits the extent to which students can understand the heritage of ideas. . . .
>
> The jargon of studies intended to promote social reform—"appreciation of culture and world values," "exploring human nature," "ethnic heritage programs," "global perspectives"—conceals a shallowness in the resulting curricula. . . . Such studies promote nothing but uninformed and undisciplined conviction, which, even if right, has no roots in knowledge or reflection.[227]

There is also still great concern for the stigma attached to the low-achieving student, and a belief that offering a variety of less rigorous courses will mask his/her learning difficulties. For this and other reasons there is disdain for required subjects, and there is support of student choice. Ravitch challenges this practice:

> . . . is it democratic for schools to permit students to decide whether they should or should not learn those things that every informed citizen should know? It is not clear why educators, more than any other profession, should become ensnared to the point of confusion by the word "democratic." Under that mantle, responsible authority has been attacked as authoritarianism, and students have been allowed to choose between an education of value and something decidedly less.[203]

Walter Lippman tells us that "we have established a system of education in which we insist that while everyone must be educated, there is nothing in particular that an educated man must know."[159]

For some reason, while there is concern for low-ability students there is not similar concern for the those at the other end of the spectrum, and therefore not equal motivation to provide a more challenging curriculum to serve their needs. Yet, in 1972, the U.S. Office of Education's "Report on the Gifted and Talented" stated that:

> Research on large-scale studies [has] concluded that gifted and talented children are disadvantaged and handicapped in the usual school situation.[278]

The report points out that, when compared with their potential, the gifted are the most retarded group in the schools, and that the boredom resulting from lack of challenge leads to behavior disorders and underachievement. Most people, including most educators, do not realize that without attention gifted children traditionally achieve at two to four grade levels below what they could. It is estimated that 20 percent of school dropouts are gifted. Joanne Whitmore believes that "gifted children are the most misunderstood and educationally neglected group in the American schools today."[278] Furthermore, by challenging the top students, standards are raised for all students.

One more example of why there will be resistance to strengthening curricula is the "notion that the cultivation of the 'total personality' [is] as important a goal as the acquisition of subject matter and cognitive skills."[159] The time required to "educate the whole child" works against efforts to upgrade curricula. Educators have taken or had thrust upon them, important—and time consuming—responsibilities once handled by home, church, and community. Certainly the willingness to accept these additional tasks is laudable, but goals must also be realistic. As Fenwick English has emphasized repeatedly:

> The function of the curriculum in schools is to answer the question, "Of all the things that could be taught/learned, what are the things (processes, knowledge, skills, concepts, etc.) that must be learned?[272]

Increase the Productive Use of Time in Schools

A study by Richard Rossmeller at the University of Wisconsin concludes that only one-third of the American student's school year is spent on learning. The remaining two-thirds are spent on such things as lunch, roll calls, and changing classes. This information attracted some notice, but other practices that detract from "time on task" also deserve attention. For example, not only are minutes and hours lost, but sometimes, whole school days. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Ohio discovered that some schools were dismissing students for a variety of reasons, and not complying with the law that requires students to be in school 180 days a year. Even when students are in school and in class, what about the time that is wasted on extraneous discussions, unnecessary movies, etc.? There are also assignments given that require too much time for the educational benefit derived and are not directly related to the subject being studied; e.g. "projects" in lieu of written book reports.

In regard to wise use of teacher time, some districts are attempting to minimize non-instructional demands by hiring aides to monitor study halls, for playground duty, etc. An instructional method that requires a great deal of teacher time and is being increasingly advocated is that of individualized instruction. There is no doubt that additional time and attention have proved effective with learning-disabled and low-ability students, but any expansion of this expensive practice to include other students should be carefully considered. Robert Ebel believes that highly individualized instruction is inefficient for several reasons: preparing individualized instructional programs is very time consuming; the pupils lose the opportunity to learn from and be motivated by other students (the very benefits that are given as reasons for busing and against tracking); and the instructional help given any one student benefits only that student and not the rest of the class. Ebel claims to know of no research which demonstrates that pupils learn more when they are taught individually than when they are instructed as a group.[70] While certainly teachers should consider students' strengths and weaknesses, the question is what is a realistic expectation for individualization in the usual classroom situation?

One way to increase "time on task" is through the wise use of homework assignments. Yet, in some of our elementary schools very little homework is given. A study comparing the amount of homework American children do compared to Japanese and Taiwanese children found that:

> In Japan, first-graders spent an average of 233 minutes every week on [homework], in Taiwan an astonishing 496 minutes, in the U.S., a mere 29. By the fifth grade, the average weekly homework minutes were up to 368, 771, and 256, respectively.[173]

Undoubtedly, these factors contribute to the Japanese children's high I.Q. and mathematics achievement test scores.

Barbara Lerner cites studies of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) that also show a clear relationship between the amount of homework and cognitive achievement.[155] We strongly recommend that boards of education, as representatives of parents, take a more active role in determining how much homework should be assigned, especially in elementary schools, and in how all students spend their time during the school day.

Instill positive attitudes and teach ethical behavior, especially in the early years*

Dr. Amitai Etzioni of George Washington University says that:

> The future of American education will depend on how much emphasis is placed on character formation as a precondition to learning . . . many children enter school "psychologically underdeveloped" because their parents have not helped them to mature sufficiently to enable them to function effectively in a school and relate to its rules and work discipline. As a result, they fail in their work.
>
> Children who are not helped to develop civility and mutuality who therefore cannot cope effectively with authority figures, rules and routines, cannot learn in school and later cannot function successfully in jobs.[121]

The *American Journal of Psychiatry* reported on a study which followed a group of people over a 35-year period; it found that the willingness and capacity to work in childhood was a more important forerunner than native intelligence, social class, or family situation to becoming well-adjusted adults with successful work lives and satisfying personal relationships.[236] The young should learn that their school work will benefit their future economic well-being and success in life. They should develop a work ethic. They should be encouraged to set goals, learn the value of self-discipline and productivity, and feel a sense of accomplishment—character traits that were once simply absorbed by young people from the atmosphere and expectations of the classroom.

Closely associated with attitude and behavior is moral and character education. For over 2,000 years, Western nations have transmitted through their educational systems basic morals and values—honesty, fairness, courage, diligence, respect for law, and respect for others—what philosophers have called "reason." But once educators were told they could not practice religion in the schools, they did not seem to know how to teach morality without it. They tried. Teachers grouped children in circles and had them play verbal games concerning which segment of society should be allowed into hypothetical bomb shelters or kicked out of imaginary rowboats. The "values clarification" process as practiced in some schools emphasized the process of valuing rather than the value itself. By causing students to think that one value is just as important as another, that there is no right or wrong, we are shaping our young people into moral neuters. "In fact, some people are convinced that what young people gain from these programs is a contempt for authority and tradition."[104]

Eighty-four percent of public school parents want moral and values education for their children. "Young people need the security and stability of a basic set of societal values and ideals for healthy psychological and social development. They are damaged when they are raised in the emotional vacuum of a value-free environment."[50] In the early days of public education in America, most educators believed that moral instruction was also part of their responsibility. We are familiar with the *McGuffey's Reader*. Its stories nearly always taught a moral. But over the years surveys show a dramatic decrease in ethical instruction. For example, one study of 4th-grade readers shows that "In 1910, 16 of every 25 pages included moral instruction; by 1930 this had fallen to 1 of every 25, and in 1950 it was .06 of every 25."[104]

---

*This solution is also in response to the societal shift.

Another analysis of elementary readers reports that obedience, thoughtfulness, and honesty have been replaced with social activity, winning friends, and success defined as gaining group approval and meeting group standards.

Why did we abandon moral education? The confusion over the separation of church and state played a part, as did the fear of brainwashing. And, "Excited by scientific success in solving complex technical problems, scholars set out to use the same scientific methods to solve human problems."[104] Perhaps moral and ethical questions were avoided because they were considered "unscientific." The question deserves a more thorough answer.

Modern educators do recognize the need for ethical instruction. However, there is a wide gap between recognition of the need and the effective implementation of a program. One program developed by the Thomas Jefferson Research Center is now in use in over 14,000 classrooms in several major cities. Another relatively new attempt to close the gap is law-related education designed to help prevent juvenile delinquency by teaching young students the fundamental values and principles on which our legal process is based.[138] Gerald Grant maintains that consistent policies, norms, and traditions are difficult to establish, but that effective schools must set standards. Values such as altruism, service, effort, and truth cannot be voluntary, or we will suffer even greater stress and instability.[228] Robert M. Hutchins warns us: "If the object of education is the improvement of man, then any system of education that is without values is a contradiction in terms."[136]

Determine what factors cause discipline problems in the schools and eliminate them*

Gallup Polls cite the lack of discipline in school as the greatest educational concern of citizens in the United States for 14 of the last 15 years. Several factors contribute to student misbehavior. Many teachers are insufficiently prepared to handle discipline problems. Inservice training in classroom management is rarely provided by school systems. Some teachers do not know how to structure class periods to avoid problems; i.e., they do not provide enough work or enough variety. Teachers who are organized, clear in their expectations, consistent with reward and punishment—who prepare interesting lessons, give feedback quickly, structure sufficient work, challenge students, and show they really care—do a much better job of managing their classrooms.[152]

Of course, some of the deterrents to misbehavior—threat of poor grades or failure, penalties for noncompletion of homework, the need to work hard in order to understand difficult subject matter—have been virtually removed from many classrooms. As John Silber points out:

> When you place demands upon students and give them an exciting curriculum, they will rise to the occasion. They won't have the time, energy or boredom that produces discipline problems and criminal behavior.[253]

Armbruster feels that many educators lost their perspective in regard to adequate discipline in that they permit ". . . language, dress, and behavior that would formerly have been deemed unacceptable . . ." and they contend that ". . . children should be treated as adults . . ."[9]

School Discipline, reporting on a 3-year study, suggests several causes of discipline problems:

- Discipline is not discussed by school personnel in a school because consensus does not exist and divisive issues are avoided.
- Teachers have almost total latitude in a classroom and telling them how they should handle discipline would be an invasion of that latitude.
- Focussing on the subject may make the principal look inadequate.
- School rules are not enforced evenly, fairly, and consistently.[59]

One of the authors, Henry Lufler, says:

> While teachers often say that the discipline problems are the result of poor homes or unhappiness in the larger society, we attribute most discipline problems to in-school factors.[59]

Nevertheless, one factor not attributable to the schools that does help to create discipline problems—and undoubtedly contributes to achievement decline—is the use of drugs and alcohol by students. One set of statistics holds that alcohol-related problems affect 19 percent of 14-17 year olds, that 62 percent of 7th graders and 80 percent of 8th graders have begun experimenting with alcohol.[67] The 1982 Report from the Secretary of Health and Human Services to Congress states that more than one in ten high school seniors uses marijuana daily, and that the age of first use has declined over the last decade. Undoubtedly, the use of other drugs also negatively affects student behavior.

As we have discussed, in their advancement of "student rights," the courts, and those who know how to use them, must assume a large share of the blame for the discipline problems in our schools. Justice Hugo Black summarizes the damage done by the courts in his dissent on *Tinker vs. Des Moines:*

> The Court's holding in this case ushers in what I deem to be an entirely new era in which the power to control pupils by the elected officials of state-supported schools in the United States is in ultimate effect transferred to the Supreme Court. . . . I repeat that if the time has come when pupils of state-supported schools can defy and flaunt orders of school officials to keep their minds on their own school work, it is the beginning of a new era of permissiveness fostered by the judiciary. . . . School discipline, like parental discipline, is an integral and important part of training our children to be good citizens—to be better citizens. Here a very small number of students have crisply and summarily refused to obey a school order designed to give pupils who want to learn the opportunity to do so. One does not need to be a prophet to know that after the Court's holding today some students in Iowa schools and

---

*This solution is also in response to the societal shift.

> indeed in all schools will be ready, able and willing to defy their teachers on practically all orders.[50]

Responsibility for discipline problems cannot then be laid exclusively at the school door.

Barbara Lerner stresses the relationship between (a) the decline in student effort and achievement in the last two decades and (b) the decline in constructive attitudes and behavior manifested by "the sharp increase in youth narcissism, grandiosity, crime, addiction, pregnancy and venereal disease rates."[155] Lerner declares that during this period "children in general and students in particular were often cast in the role of victim by establishment stalwarts as well as by gurus of the counter-culture" and that such exaggerated advocacy was destructive for young Americans.[155] And, as Armbruster has told us,

> . . . youngsters are now faced with . . . questionable environmental factors. At all socioeconomic levels and in almost all areas these days, they are exposed to motion pictures in which gutter language and illicit sex are treated as the norm, and illegal behavior and irresponsible, anti-social people are glamorized. . . . Magazines, of course, are the worst offenders; since they are all over, there is no rating system to guide parents on the less obvious offenders, and their formats are slick and seemingly respectable. . . . Rock music lyrics also often stress illicit sex and drug use.*[9]

The effect of these "questionable factors" is that

> . . . never before have parents . . . been forced to cope with such a widespread attack on authority, the home, morals and values while at the same time trying to earn a living, to raise a family, and see to their children's education. When schools, too, began to back down, many parents were in despair. . .[9]

Superintendent Robert Stabile asks in the *Ohio School Boards Journal*, "How do we get the toothpaste back into the tube?"[237] School boards must establish strong discipline policies and hold their superintendents accountable for implementing them. Principals should share their problems with the community and solicit support. School staffs must be consistent in their expectations and in their approach to discipline. Parents must limit television, support school discipline policies, and encourage homework completion and improved achievement. Legislatures must pass whatever laws are necessary—or rescind some—to support local control and authority and thwart excessive judicial interference in the governance of the schools.

Objectively evaluate preschool programs to determine their long-term educational value, their effects on the child and family, and how they should be funded

There is disagreement over whether early education is in the best interests of young children and their later achievement.

Copperman reports that the 1974 Metropolitan Readiness Test showed that 80 percent of preschool children scored above the average established in 1964. He attributes that increase to an enormous expansion of school enrollment, a change in preschool instruction to include more academic training, and preschoolers' viewing of the television show "Sesame Street." However, he tells us that,

> While there is evidence that reading readiness instruction in kindergarten can have long-term benefits if followed up by teachers in all subsequent grades, the preponderance of recent research indicates that most of the gains experienced by preschool children in group educational programs disappear by the end of the first or second grade.[50]

About 10 percent of preschool enrollment, or 4.5 million children, was enrolled in Head Start. David Caruso and Douglas Detterman maintain that when it became clear that Head Start was having no lasting effects on the intellectual functioning of the children who participated in the program, the goals of the program were changed so that self-esteem and social skills took priority over academic and language development. They report that 40 to 60 percent of the studies conducted on Head Start showed little or no effect of early intervention on I.Q.;† however, they also cite another study showing that participation in preschool programs reduces special-class placement and retention in later grades.[39]

More recent studies show more positive results. The longitudinal "Ypsilanti Study" found that, 20 years after attending a preschool program in a low-income neighborhood, attendees "fare better as students, workers, and citizens than children from the same neighborhood who did not attend the preschool."[200] They were more likely to have avoided breaking the law, to have graduated from high school, and to have become economically self-sufficient, and less likely to have been enrolled in special education programs than those who did not attend. Some Ypsilanti statistics:

	Attendees	Nonattendees
Completed high school	67%	49%
Postsecondary training	38%	21%
Employed by age 19	50%	32%
Receiving welfare	17%	37%

---

*This book was published in 1977, and those environmental factors have certainly not improved. However, anyone objecting to this kind of fare may stand accused of censorship and be treated shabbily by those with the authority to make changes. Some adults seem to want the kind of entertainment in their homes that they used to have to go to elsewhere to find, forgetting or not caring that youngsters in various stages of development are also being exposed to it. And many in the entertainment and advertising fields are only too happy to provide what these adults want and stimulate them to demand even more, forgetting any obligation to society as a whole.

Recently a new rating, "PG-13," has been added for films that may be too "intense" for children under 13. Syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman is "underwhelmed by Hollywood's attempt to modify its code instead of its behavior" and suggests it "scale down its behavior instead of scaling up its ratings."

†One should ask whether it is reasonable to expect to change I.Q. Wouldn't the more appropriate research question be whether students were subsequently able to fulfill their potential?

	Attendees	Nonattendees
Pregnancies by age 19	17 in 25 girls	28 in 24 girls
Arrests	73%	145%
Special education (% of school time)	16%	25%

John Clement, research coordinator for the study, claims a return of 88 cents on the dollar in reduced educational costs, and projecting over a lifetime of earnings, estimates that preschool programs recover three to four times their original cost.[199]

A study of New York's pre-kindergarten efforts showed similar results:

> . . . significantly fewer pre-kindergarten children than control group children had repeated grades or been placed in special education classes . . . in the sample of 1,348 pre-kindergarten children, 117 children who might not otherwise be adequately meeting the requirements of school were making normal progress.
>
> Projecting these figures to the estimated 45,000 children entering New York State's schools each year from disadvantaged backgrounds suggests that substantial savings in the cost of special education and remediation might be realized by expanding educational opportunities for preschool children.[83]

A similar study done in Philadelphia also showed positive results, and provides evidence that intervention can have effects beyond the first and second grades.

> In kindergarten, first, second, third, and fourth grade, child-care graduates in 1981-82 exceeded national norm expectations by a large margin in both reading and mathematics.
>
> Get Set Day Care graduates [the experimental group] in 1981-82 exceeded national norm expectations by a substantial margin K-3 in mathematics and K-2 in reading. . . . Get Set Day Care graduates either outperformed or equaled Total City [the control group] performance at kindergarten through seventh grade in both areas, except in total reading at grades five and six. . . . In this comparison it is to be noted that the Total City represents a socioeconomic cross section in contrast to Get Set's extensive lower income representation.
>
> Graduates of the Parent Cooperative Nursery Program in 1981-82 exceeded national norm expectations by a very large margin in both reading and mathematics at kindergarten through fourth grade.[126]

The differing research results have not helped to solve the question of whether preschool education is necessary. Many parents strongly believe that young children should remain at home, and that organized educational activities at such an early age can even be harmful. Caruso and Detterman point out that by fiscal year 1980 we had spent $6.5 billion on Head Start but only a pittance to research its effects. They note that research had no effect on Head Start and Head Start had no effect on research.[39]

Others say that the evaluation literature is so vast and its results so varied that virtually any hypothesis can be supported. Some of the questions which have not been adequately answered are:

- Are the documented gains resulting from early education sustainable beyond early primary grades?
- Is reinforcement necessary for gains to be sustained?
- Do children who come to school better prepared than others lose that advantage because teachers "catch up" the other students and teach to the mean?

Because approximately half the mothers of preschool children are working and place their children in day care facilities, and because recent evidence suggests that children are capable of learning more at earlier ages than we had once thought possible, we need to know what works in preschool education and what doesn't. We also need to examine how such education should be provided: by private agencies funded by tuition, by the federal government, by state agencies or local public schools, by businesses as a convenience to employees, or by some combination of these.

Provide Early Screening To Detect Special Needs

Children should be screened early to detect special learning needs or learning gifts—perhaps even to determine at what age they should enter school. The Peotone (Illinois) Project on the early prevention of school failure has developed a thorough, inexpensive screening process which has been copied and validated by districts in 48 states and five foreign countries.[68] The program helps parents understand the importance of early identification of learning problems and how to effectively help their children; it also helps youngsters master the pre-academic skills related to reading success. Their research has discovered a seven-year span of readiness in the typical kindergarten room. Some children enter school at a 2½-year level of readiness (a 6-year level is required to learn to read).[68] Also some children with difficulties are not discovered or referred for help until the 4th grade—much later than necessary. Many school failures can be avoided through more sophisticated entrance procedures.

Standardized Testing Programs Should More Effectively Monitor Student Achievement, Especially in Relation to Student Potential

States should establish state-wide levels of achievement in basic skills and require local school districts to participate in national standardized testing of at least reading and math skills. These tests should be given at the 3rd-grade level and two other levels, probably the 6th and 9th grades. Most school districts currently decide which tests they will administer and when. State requirements vary. The United States is the only advanced country in the world with neither a uniform system of educational evaluation nor a centralized federal data collection effort.[9, 50] As a result, any attempt to assess what happened during this recent period of achievement decline in order to put it into historical perspective is extremely difficult. If we had not had testing, we would not have been able to document the decline to the extent that we did and begin to assess the causes of that decline. As Freeman notes:

> In 1967, former H.E.W. Chief Wilbur Cohen criticized the voluminous, yet unsuitable data . . . as practically none of it measures the output of our educational system in terms that really matter—that is, in terms of what students have learned . . . It is an incredible fact that the nation has, year after year, been spending billions of dollars on an enterprise without a realistic accounting of that investment.[100]

This complaint was made *100 years* after Congress passed the Department of Education Act for:

> . . . the purposes of collecting such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and progress of education in the several States and Territories and of diffusing such information respecting the organization and management of schools and school systems, and methods of teaching as shall aid the people of the United States in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems and otherwise promote the cause of education throughout the country.[265]

Now, 116 years later, *we still do not have sufficient statistics and facts on the progress of education.*

The lack of nationwide statistical data is partly due to popular aversion to federal intrusion into educational matters, but it stems mostly from a strong bias of powerful groups against testing in this country: the NEA, liberal educators—professors and teachers—and the civil rights movement have all resisted useful educational testing.

Some teachers honestly feel that parents can't understand test scores, but little has been done to help the parents understand. Ravitch believes test scores are released without the explanation that the tests are designed so that 50 percent of those taking them are expected to score below grade level. By definition, half of any given population always falls below the "median." Naturally the public begins clamoring when they hear that 53 percent are "below average."[201] For teachers, it's easier to avoid the entire subject. School board members, who represent the parents, have not demanded the kinds of explanations that are necessary to interpret test-score data effectively, and their school board associations do not encourage them to do so.

The NEA and some educators stress that tests are too rigid and confining, and cannot possibly measure all the affective goals they are meeting, which they feel are equally as important as cognitive skills. They fear that teachers will feel compelled to teach "to the test"—that is, to devote a majority, if not all, of class time to those areas covered by tests. In addition, the NEA fears that test scores will be used to measure teacher effectiveness. Such attempts at accountability are anathema to the union.

Ebel counters with the argument that teachers should make only limited and discreet efforts to reshape pupils' affective dispositions by any means that are not primarily cognitive. He says that direct instruction toward an affective objective is essentially cognitive, anyway, and should be an outgrowth of good teaching and learning rather than an objective in and of itself. Ebel also believes that all important outcomes of instruction are tangible— observable and measurable. In order for an outcome to be effectively taught, it must be clearly defined and therefore could be effectively tested. He concludes that those who claim that what they are teaching cannot be substantiated through testing should not be believed.[71] Permeating these arguments is a lack of consensus about the function of a classroom and what should be taught.

The opposition of civil rights advocates to standardized testing contributed to the view that nothing could be measured and that nothing was worth measuring. But this line of logic would lead to a belief that hard work and schooling make little difference—even though these very things make a greater difference in the lives of oppressed minorities than in anyone else's. Copperman explains why civil rights advocates are working against their own best interests, that

> . . . the attempt by the civil rights movement to ban standardized tests does not serve the interests of minority children. The achievement gap between majority and minority students is real, and we need to close the gap, not mask its existence . . . So long as standardized tests reveal an academic deficit, our society will be obligated to attempt to close the gap. If we alter or ban the tests in order to disguise the deficit, what is to prevent the society from lapsing back into complacency about the educational problems of minority children?[50]

The achievement gap is no different from the economic gap. It is not due to inherent capacity, but to the lack of opportunity. *Disguising the gap discourages a remedy.*

Standardized testing has also been criticized for not being able to predict success in life or measure motivation. It is not supposed to. Its purposes are to measure ability and achievement and to predict success in school. *Further, the main purpose of testing insofar as measuring the performance of schools should be to reveal what percentage of students are achieving their potential, not whether one school district's scores are higher than another district's.* It could well be that a district with overall lower scores is doing a better job of working with its student population than is a district with overall higher scores. Tests can also help us find weaknesses in curricula, learn what works and what doesn't, monitor subject-matter mastery, signal the need for intervention, and help underachievers realize their potential.

We need better tests to measure where a student is upon entering school, a particular grade, or a class—tests that also accurately measure the *ability to learn*, and not merely what has been learned. Such tests would allow better comparisons between potential and achievement. Except in the very early grades, and perhaps even then, ability or I.Q. tests primarily measure whether the teacher has been teaching or the student, learning.

Instead of banning tests because of their weaknesses or because they confirm that we have not reached educational or societal Utopia, we should support their improvement so that they can give us more accurate information with which to measure our progress.

Parents, taxpayers, and the legislators who represent them are interested in results. If the public schools cannot be persuaded to justify public support by providing reliable, quantitative evidence of pupils' achievements in learning, nonpublic schools are likely to continue gaining supporters. A public institution that refuses to respond to public demands is unlikely to survive. U.S. public education must be strengthened. The first step is not more federal aid, or more state aid, or higher local millages. The critical first step is more comprehensive and systematic assessment of pupils' learning achievement.[71]

Progression through school should be based on the mastery of skills

Children should enter school when they are mentally and emotionally ready, not at some arbitrary chronological age. They should progress through the individual disciplines when they have mastered the required skills of the previous level, regardless of the time needed. Children will move at different rates in different subjects at different times in their maturation; a student could conceivably be at Level 4 in reading, Level 2 in math, and so on. By promoting students in this way, the pressure for social promotion will be reduced, children will more clearly understand what is expected of them, and parents will have a clearer picture of their children's progress. If this change is too drastic for some to accept, then more emphasis should be placed on a system of instruction based on actual mastery of skills within the current grade structure. Report cards should tell at what level a student is in each subject, and test score reports to school boards should include the numbers of students in each grade that are at the various levels.

Later, employers would have a more candid assessment of an applicant's qualifications. (Employers' demand for high school diplomas as proof of a prospective employee's reliability, without evidence of skill levels attained, has very likely added to the pressure for social promotion problems in the schools.) Children should not be allowed to progress through school without learning to read, or without mastering other basic skills. While the Chicago Public Schools recently threw out their "mastery learning program," based on the system developed by Benjamin Bloom, the problem, some charge, was not with the concept, but with how the program was implemented. The difficulties encountered in Chicago as well as successful programs elsewhere should be studied so that we can learn from them.

Mastery learning programs do require more monitoring of student achievement and more pre- and post-testing.

> Formal pretesting is altogether too rare at all levels of education . . . [yet] teaching success and learning [can be judged] more realistically when observable data are relied upon at both the start and the end of the teaching operation.[132]

Naturally, the need to assess what students already know before giving them additional instruction is more apparent in the upper grades. However, there are many instances of very young children being forced to study the alphabet when they already know how to read, and in other areas to repeat what they learned in nursery school or at home, which leads some commentators to say that:

> Many a trip to the fire station, the dairy, or unit on the Plains Indians could be avoided or massively modified in *intent* if more real concern for the present level of pupil knowledge were exhibited.[132]

Basing student progress on mastery learning with appropriate pre- and post-testing could help determine the length of school day and school year, and might have a significant effect on the discipline and drop-out problems. Such a system should also identify weak teachers and improve educational accountability.

Re-establish credible standards for the measurement of academic progress

Many educators cannot accept the fact that to teach is to set a standard.

> Any test, any examination, any standard, no matter how designed, aims to separate the wheat from the chaff, the qualified from the unqualified, which means some will pass and some will fail.[100]

Mainly because of the shift from equality of opportunity to equality of result and the concern for destroying the self-esteem of students, failure came to be avoided. Therefore, standards were greatly reduced. John Silber, President of Boston University, acknowledges that

> . . . professional educators wanted to design a program in which no one could fail. But the consequence was that no one could succeed. The standards had been set so low that gifted and average students met those standards with ease, and, as a result, were never pushed to the level of achievement of which they were genuinely capable. We suffer from that to an appalling degree.[253]

Standards were also lowered through grade inflation. While standardized achievement scores declined, the percentage of high grades increased. Houston Superintendent Billy Reagan discovered little correlation in his district between grades received and knowledge obtained. Many students making As and Bs were failing departmental exams. Now students are required to pass standardized tests in key subjects or repeat the classes.

Grade inflation gave students a message: one does not have to work hard to be rewarded. One study shows that 48 percent of low-achieving students always received academic praise, but only 30 percent of high-achieving students did. Interestingly, 37 percent of the top achievers felt they were working hard, when in fact 63 percent were actually doing so, whereas 54 percent of the low achievers believed they were working quite hard, when only 18 percent actually were.[50] Could high praise for low achievement cause students to learn less? Throughout their school years, many youngsters and their parents were led to believe they were performing quite well, but "many of these students suffer from a delusion of adequacy, engendered by an educational system which is lying to them."[50]

Grade inflation and social promotion virtually eliminated the possibility of failure, robbing students of the learning experience that comes from failing and of the motivation that comes from the threat of failure. Some students work to get As, but others work to avoid Fs. Ebel tells us,

> . . . success has no meaning or value in the absence of the possibility and indeed the occasional experience of failure . . . The pseudo-success that results from refusal to admit failures may fool pupils, parents, and the public for awhile, but ultimately it will be exposed for the deception it surely is . . . When lack of learning no longer makes any obvious difference in progress through school, deficiencies in learning became more numerous and more serious. Let us stop pretending that pupils never fail to learn satisfactorily. . . . Schools without failure have failed.[70]

Dr. Silber makes the point that grade inflation, social promotion, and the like have resulted in the high school diploma's becoming a fraudulent credential: it does not guarantee a level of literacy. But, these practices might never have become prevalent if college admission standards had been maintained and strengthened. Colleges and universities lowered standards to admit unprepared youth, and accommodated them further by continuing grade inflation. Freeman compares American practices with those of the Europeans:

> Our practices have lowered the value of a college degree just as earlier we have made a high school diploma nearly meaningless. Europeans enter a university for professional or graduate study. Most of our students are not ready for such study until about four years later. Consequently, Americans enter a professional career and gainful activity several years later than Europeans. This would not be the case if talented Americans were challenged to the level of their capacity during their years of attendance at the lower schools.
>
> In a mad rush for the elusive goal of equality, American educational institutions have neglected the pursuit of excellence, at an enormous cost to their students, donors, and to the taxpayers.[100]

Determine the factors that improve student achievement and disseminate the findings to teachers, administrators, and local and state school board members. Successful programs and methods should be publicized and implemented

As Chester Finn says:

> There is a definite need for research about how children learn. To improve U.S. education, we must have sophisticated inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning, sustained study of public and private schools and other educational providers, judicious experimentation with new techniques and organizational forms, and wide dissemination of promising ideas and sound practices.[94]

Discovering more about motivating underachievers, effective discipline methods, and intervention techniques would help to overcome some of the problems leading to illiteracy. An awareness of the results of valid research and a willingness to make the corresponding changes certainly ought to improve student learning. But, as former Education Secretary Terrel Bell has noted, the refusal of educators to adopt markedly successful practices and procedures has caused a serious deficiency in education over the years. Areas that need to be studied include the following:

- *Evaluation of past efforts.* Millions of taxpayers' dollars have been spent, yet one is hard-pressed to point to improvements in student learning or achievement because of federal efforts and expenditures in educational research. How were decisions on research funding requests made? How valid was the research? How were the results utilized? What impact did the research have on student achievement, or on educational expenditures? Who has benefitted, and how?
- *Validation of existing research to determine what works and what is feasible.* What is the best method of teaching reading? Is preschool stimulation necessary for reading readiness? Why are some students progressing through school without learning to read? It is time we answer such basic questions. Steps should be taken to insure objectivity in the conduct of federally funded research.
- *More careful commissioning of new research.* We must give priority to answering longstanding questions. Let us deal with questions we have all been aware of: how differences in maturation between boys and girls affect their rate of learning; what happens between 3rd and 4th grades; why are some students motivated and not others? Perhaps we should study successful students. Who does research should also be re-examined. Is federally funded research necessary with so many universities and private foundations already involved?
- *Awareness.* Most Americans and many educators are unaware of the resources and information that are available: the National Center for Educational Statistics, NIE, the National Diffusion Network, and ERIC, among others. More should be done to publicize activities of these agencies and how school districts and individuals can have access to them.
- *Sharing what has been successful.* We need to know what programs and methods have worked in various school districts and in other countries. With new technology, faster and more efficient methods of communicating information should be easily found.

Develop More Effective Drop-Out Prevention Measures; Reassess the System of Compulsory Education

Drop-out prevention measures must begin early.

Identification

Evidence shows that future school failure is detectable at a very young age:

> 6 or 7 of every 10 later school failures can be correctly classified by characteristics exhibited in the third grade. . . . Some achievement difficulties of students [who later fail] begin as early as grades one to three. . . . Third grade is the point . . . at which it has been estimated that 50 percent of future achievement patterns have been set.[56]

Many teachers maintain that, by 4th grade, the great majority of students who will later drop out are identifiable. And, Hyrum Smith maintains that sound elementary guidance programs could eliminate approximately 70 percent of the potential drop-outs.[178]

Characteristics of future drop-outs have been described many times: emotional dependence upon others; inferiority complex; inability to defer gratification; feelings of helplessness; a hyperactive or hyperkinetic condition; lack of interest in academic activities; poor work habits; high rate of absenteeism; disrespect for authority figures;[118] need for interpersonal relationships with school staff; not less bright than others, but underachievers, functioning poorly within the traditional classroom setting; lack of future occupational goals; inability to relate the curriculum to future employment needs.

Part of the reason we have not identified potential drop-outs early is the attitude prevalent in the schools themselves. According to Dale Henley, director of a drop-out prevention project in Colorado:

> Some schools readily admit that the reasons students drop out may have as much to do with the school itself as the students' problems and "shortcomings." The drop-out rate in a school or system actually reflects many times the program, the teachers and the attitudes within the institution.[178]

Successful drop-out prevention programs always have two things in common:

- The school personnel have a commitment to keeping students in school.
- There is a responsible adult personally interested in each potential drop-out.

The decision to drop out of school is probably made during the junior high years, the period during which disruptive behavior, violence, and vandalism peak. Early adolescence has received very *little systematic* study, yet children of this age are apparently making very important decisions, in an unconducive atmosphere, about whether or not to stay in school.

Poor Reading Skills: A Contributing Factor

No matter who is listing the characteristics of drop-outs, one that is nearly always included is poor reading skill from an early age. One teacher working with a class of drop-outs in a large city said that the reading level among her students ranged from pre-primer to 12th grade. In Philadelphia, another drop-out prevention project reported reading levels as low as the 1st grade, 5th month.[178] A study by Tulane University's Education Department shows that the high drop-out rate in Louisiana public schools stems from poor self-control fostered by low reading ability. A pilot program begun two years ago has resulted in increased reading and writing ability and a reduced drop-out rate.

Guy Bond and Miles Tinker believe that "The vast majority of our disability cases are brought about through faulty learning or lack of educational adjustment of one sort or another."[268] They list several factors that contribute to reading deficiency:

- child development over-emphasized to the detriment of reading opportunities
- lack of reading readiness activity
- forced promotion policy coupled with fixed-level material
- failure to adjust to individual differences
- improper use of materials or methods
- inadequate coordination of the language arts
- untested progressive methods
- poorly trained, inexperienced, or inflexible teachers
- inadequate library facilities

William Kottmeyer makes a stronger statement:

> The plain fact of the matter is that poor teaching or poor learning conditions are probably responsible for more reading disability than all the other investigated causes put together.[268]

By the time a student with poor reading skills reaches the secondary level, some form of emotional reaction will nearly always surface, and its manifestations—withdrawal, rebellion, aggression, and so forth—frequently exacerbate reading problems. Authorities disagree about whether personality maladjustment is the cause or the effect of reading disability. Bond and Tinker say that the evidence suggests "that in only a few cases does the personality maladjustment existing prior to reading experience prevent a child from learning to read."[268] They reason that, in most instances, the emotional difficulties clear up when the reading problems respond to remedial instruction. Kottmeyer reports that in only 6 percent of his clinical cases was he "fairly sure that emotional disturbance was a significant factor in the original cause of failure to learn."[268] With low-achieving students, the secondary teacher has a special respon*sibility:*

> The student who has frequently failed over a period of time in school is often a boy or girl who feels extremely unworthy in his associations with others of his age group. In the early history of his disability he most likely was confused and perplexed by concepts which he

> failed to grasp. Too often he becomes the object of shame and scorn in the classroom because of his failure to read well enough to participate in class activities. The feeling of being an unworthy reader is pervasive; soon this student feels that he is unworthy and inadequate in all things. He must be helped to realize that a reading disability is not a matter of unworthiness; it is rather a matter of inadequacy.[168]

According to Bond and Tinker, programs to prevent drop-outs should emphasize at least three kinds of instruction:

> A thorough-going reading readiness program in preparing the child for initial reading and for reading at successively higher levels; proper adjustment of instruction to individual differences; and systematic development programs at all levels.[32]

The Delinquency Factor

We must be careful that drop-out prevention is not viewed as a means of reducing unemployment and delinquency rather than as an attempt to assure literacy. In his well-known study, *Youth in Transition*, Jerald Bachman concludes that

> . . . any difference between the unemployment of drop-outs and graduates was due largely to the background and ability of the person, not the amount of education or the attainment of a high school degree. . . .[186]

Another study argues that:

> . . . the relationship between dropping out of school and delinquent behavior is more complex than it is ordinarily assumed. Although studies have shown that an early school leaver is twice as likely to have a criminal record as his counterparts who have received their high school diplomas, we also have data that indicate that 'drop-outs were above average in delinquency' before they dropped out and 'there is no evidence that this delinquency increased as a result of dropping out.' Dropping out does not appear to cause delinquency; rather, delinquency is one of the most accurate predictors of which students will drop out.[186]

Compulsory Education

In addition to doing everything we possibly can to retain in school those students who can benefit from it, we need to reassess how long we keep them there and why. The length of time a student stays in school should be based on how much additional learning can reasonably be expected to occur—*not* on the amount of state aid schools receive for those in attendance, the employment situation, the perception of law enforcement officials that fewer teenagers in school would increase their work load, or the desire of parents to have a convenient and socially acceptable baby-sitting service. Columnist Ellen Goodman points out that more school does not beget more education: although the number of high-school graduates has increased from 40 of every 100 students in the 1940s to 75 of every 100 in the early 1980s, we remain dissatisfied with the results.[111]

We force our students to stay in school longer than other countries. The expense of this practice has not been examined, but we know it is great. Besides the lost revenue from delayed entry into the labor force, there is the per-pupil cost of schooling, increased because of smaller classes needed as maintaining discipline becomes more difficult, and the cost of enforcing attendance policies. A more subtle cost—the "latent curriculum," as Benjamin Bloom calls it—is the lesson our young people learn about low productivity from such a system.

For those who cannot or will not benefit from remaining in school, alternatives should be examined: apprenticeships in industry; allowing students to transfer to adult education classes (with a different thrust) where they could earn a GED; or allowing students to complete schooling later free of charge, thus guaranteeing everyone the equivalent of 13 years of education, (kindergarten through 12th) regardless of when they are taken.

Emphasize the Need for Broad-Based Responsibility for Instilling Positive Attitudes and Improving Student Accomplishment

Parents and guardians need to be more assertive in determining what their children are learning, not learning, and should be learning. They should demand candid assessments of ther children's progress, measured against their potential. They should insist that homework be assigned and completed. They should limit the time spent on television, electronic games, and nonessential jobs; in short, they should carefully monitor whatever draws attention away from learning.

The media (especially the electronic media) can have a tremendous impact if it continues to focus on current educational problems and possible solutions, makes ongoing educational reporting a priority, and uses its influence over young people for positive ends. For example, it can:

- Provide positive role models by depicting students who care about learning and achievement, and adults who respect literature and culture.
- Portray the problems of those who do not take advantage of their educational opportunities.
- Detail the harmful effects of drugs.
- Provide discussions of instant vs. deferred gratification, the work ethic, and self-discipline.
- Produce documentaries on educational issues.
- Keep constantly in mind that whatever is aired—even if it is aimed at adult audiences—is viewed by youth and helps to shape their values and influence their decisions.
- Utilize commercial air time for programs that will be of educational value to adolescents.

Finally, all adults should be more aware of and concerned about the social forces shaping our youth. They should support efforts to improve education, and activities to encourage positive behavior. By the same token, society should register strong, clear disapproval of influences that thwart positive attitudes and detract from achievement.

In Response to the Governance Shift

Initiate Reforms to Make the Public School System More Responsive and Accountable

Responsiveness

A 1975 report by the National Committee for Citizens in Education, which solicited testimony from 190 participants in several states, stresses the need for accountability for public education:

> Conventional wisdom and democratic ideology hold that the social services crucial to the public's welfare and survival should be subject to the public's will. Schooling is no exception . . . the ultimate authority to control public schools should rest with the public . . . [However] the public's ability to control public schools has undergone a substantial dilution, and reforms are needed to redress the imbalance.[198]

The report goes on to say that students and parents find it difficult, if not impossible, to influence school governance or to participate in the structures established to operate the schools because professional educators are the most powerful group involved in education. Teachers have become extremely powerful in recent years as a result of collective bargaining agreements, and, as Albert Shanker bluntly put it, "Power is taken from someone."[198] The power the educators take ultimately comes from the parents and the community.

Many people feel that the lack of responsiveness is due to the gradual decline in the number of school districts from 110,000 to 16,000 (for three times as many students). A corresponding increase in the size of schools resulted in more bureaucracy, overseen by fewer lay school boards.

Ralph Tyler tells us that schools, like many other institutions, can become rigid bureaucracies clinging to outmoded practices, while building shells to protect themselves from pressure. They become narcissistic, responding to the desires of the members rather than to the clients they were established to serve.[259] A recent *Fortune Magazine* article describes the problems of education as those typical of any socialized monopoly and compares our public school system to that of Soviet agriculture:

> It is beyond help as currently organized because its incentive structure is all wrong. Symptoms include: the persistent tendency to treat capital as a free good and all possible uses of it as equal; constant mismatching of supply and demand, so that a shortage like the current dearth of science teachers is inevitably followed by a glut; prices administered without regard to incentives, so that all teachers must be paid on the same scale; an absence of internal checks and balances to prevent wholesale imposition of officially favored enthusiasms, such as the rage in the 1970s for the look-and-say method of learning to read, and for "open classrooms," which were supposed to free students for creative pursuits but turned into dens of babble; a pervasive politicization, a search of panaceas, and inexorable growth.[34]

The author presents, as a political axiom, that an intensely concerned minority will always prevail over a mildly intrigued majority. And he notes that, since this is the present case in education, the outlook for reform is gloomy. "Meliorative reform has little chance of success," says Tyler, "because it doesn't serve the interest of the educational bureaucracies."[259] Armbruster adds that the recent educational trends were generated by educators supported by special interest groups, and therefore will not be easily reversed.[10] At a recent National Forum on Excellence in Education, Marcella Donovan, director of the American Education Coalition, said:

> The education community has an extraordinary ability to feign agreement with its critics, put itself in charge of a so-called reform process and then use that very process to organize new raids on the public purse. All this is done while perpetuating the very ills it claims to be correcting ...the focus should be on curriculum and teaching methods. Instead, it is on band-aid cures. . . .[206]

Elected officials could help. State legislatures should require their education committees or special committees to conduct investigations in order to: determine factors that could improve student learning, provide evidence that students are achieving at expectancy levels, and thoroughly investigate all avenues to reorient or save funds. Or they should satisfy themselves that state boards of education are taking these steps.

Congress can help by holding hearings in order to gather testimony from parents, students and school board members, as well as those quiet critics cited throughout this report. In short, Congress needs to listen to people instead of lobbyists. Congress also needs to examine the complaints that the present distribution of federal funds may inhibit rather than facilitate student learning.

The Office of the President and the U.S. Department of Education should focus national attention on educational successes and failures, persisting until changes are made. They should continue to analyze the status of educational achievement and to investigate areas of persistent failure.

Competition

Critics of the comprehensive high school may be correct in believing that we can no longer expect to meet the needs of all students in one type of school, which gives us all the more reason to allow parents and students a choice of schools. Dennis Doyle argues for specialized schools—an old idea in other countries—in order to better satisfy parents and students.[61]

Magnet and alternative schools attract diverse social classes with shared educational values. They prove that Americans do care about whom they go to school with, but are more interested in the behavior and aspirations of their classmates than in their social class and race. Magnet schools often have lengthy waiting lists, which gives evidence of the limited choices available to parents and students as education consumers.

William Raspberry writes that Booker T. Washington High School was what desegregationists had in mind when they coined the term "magnet school." The school is racially integrated, harmoniously, and was recently cited by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the 150 best high schools in the Nation. It works academically, socially, and athletically, Raspberry says, "because of that undefinable thing called atmosphere."

Magnet schools introduce an element of competition within the public school system, whereas a voucher system would encourage competition both within the public system and between public and private schools. Opponents maintain that a voucher system is unworkable, but proponents believe it would force schools to manage their operations efficiently and be responsive to their communities. Whereas taxes now subsidize schools, under the voucher plan, they would subsidize students. (In principle, the plan works like the G.I. Bill, which provided educational benefits to veterans.) Many fear that poor parents would not know how to use the system, but Milton Friedman, the originator of the idea, is confident that the rich would benefit hardly at all, the middle class only moderately, and the lower class enormously.[197] The idea of a voucher system has gained acceptance over the years; a 1983 Gallup Poll shows the general population favoring it 51 to 38 percent, and public school parents favoring it 48 to 41 percent.

Some people object to any support for private schools because of the high percentage that are religious (mainly Catholic) and they firmly believe that the concept violates the doctrine of separation of church and state. However, others feel that the Founding Fathers meant only to forbid government support of one religion to the exclusion of all others.[212]

Strengthening private schools through tuition tax credits would also allow educational choice. Ironically, many educators argue for student choice of courses but resist parental choice of schools. Credits would acknowledge parents' right to choose the kind of education they want for their children.

Another argument made against public support for private education is that the public treasury simply cannot afford it. However, "Canadian economist E.G. West . . . estimates that if 0.8 percent of students left the public school system, the resulting savings would pay for the [vouchers]."[34]

Probably the strongest resistance to support for private schooling is the firmly entrenched American belief that private schools are elitist, that citizens should be introduced to democracy through a shared educational experience,[156] and that all races, religions, and socioeconomic groups should be forced to mix in order to improve future harmony. However:

> The public schools' melting-pot role was probably always exaggerated . . . Many immigrants went through parochial schools. Current figures even seem to show that private schools are more integrated socially and racially than public schools.[34]

Thus it would seem that the real dilemma is—or should be—the choice between enforced sharing of a single educational experience or parental freedom to choose the kind of education they feel is best for their child. (Another question is whether families actually have that freedom without additional public support for private schools.) The decision between the two options should be based on which contributes most to student learning, the major goal of education.

Lawrence Uzzell maintains that

> . . . If parents had the same freedom to choose schools as to choose pediatricians and dentists, the "experts" of modern pedagogy could be judged by results, not claims.[264]

Reform

If for whatever reason—whether forced accountability, the threat or reality of increased public funding for private education, mounting public pressure, or a combination of these—the public school monopoly opened itself up to real reform, what could be done to enable the lay public to reassert its rightful authority?

Here are a few necessary reforms:

Lay Involvement. Schools must include parents in the process of making certain important decisions, such as: What should the schools teach? How much homework should be assigned? Should children have letter grades? Is a longer school day necessary? Parents must also be better informed. They should have their child's standardized test scores and expectancy levels explained to them. They should also be told how the students as a group tested in the various disciplines—how their school compared with others in the district, in the state, and in the nation.

In order for parents to have a real impact, they need to be involved in a formal structure with an ongoing purpose, such as a parent council for each school. These councils can be advisory, evaluating the school and making recommendations, or they can be governing councils having an equal voice with school personnel. Such governing councils have been established in several cities.[249]

School personnel will have to work at shared decision-making, since many lay people see themselves as unable to direct the educational enterprise, and are reluctant to exert pressure on professional educators. The increased effort would result in increased support. Unfortunately, too many times

> . . . citizens' involvement in school-policy making tends to be through either ephemeral, crisis-oriented groups that spring up suddenly to deal with a special problem and then fade away just as quickly or co-opted groups that wind up as simply "public relations" groups and serve only as mechanisms for presenting the views of professional educators to the community.[198]

To avoid these destructive public reactions, educators should conduct community surveys to solicit candid feedback on their performance.

Another substantial reform would be to open salary negotiations to the public or to conduct them at the state level. Considering that most states are governed by a "Sunshine Law," which prohibits important actions being taken in private, it makes no sense that negotiations that affect the entire community should be decided behind closed doors, then ratified before the public is aware of the agreements or the cost. Time limits should also be imposed on negotiations, and negotiable matters limited to compensation and procedural rights. Moving the negotiations process to the state level would guarantee more exposure of the settlements, and avoid the possibility of playing one district against another. It would also save local districts a great deal of time and anguish, thereby improving relations between the teachers and the local administration. Districts that wished to could pay more than the state-negotiated salary, but such decisions would be non-negotiable on the local level.

Other needed reforms include an increase in the power and authority of local boards, so that they may better represent parents, and a reduction of federal and state mandates and court decisions to allow local districts to govern themselves once again.

The demand for results or "accountability" are reactions to the erosion of citizen control and the domination of local schools by professional educators:

> Accountability said, in effect, that laymen have little hope of recapturing control over the process of schooling, but, by gaining control over the "product," it might be possible for them to reassert their rightful authority.[198]

Establishment and evaluation of goals. Another substantive reform would be the establishment of clearly defined, effectively evaluated goals for individual schools, for local districts, and for entire state systems. Tyler tells us that:

> In a static bureaucracy the lack of clearly defined goals and evidence of progress toward them result in the staff's focusing its attention on ambitions, personal interests, and feelings of its members to the neglect of the overall mission.[259]

Clearly defined mission statements are the basis for the "effective schools" proposed by Ron Edmonds. Acceptance by the principal and faculty of a set of clearly defined goals and a means of evaluating those goals is critical to the success of these schools. Setting and evaluating goals is certainly not a new idea, but how many schools or school systems actually do it? Twenty years ago, professors at Michigan State University wrote:

> Schools are essentially purposes. That is, they are institutionalized means for both the determination and achievement of goals. . . . Purpose is what directs human activity. It is an idea of something to be achieved. . . . It should be clear that a precise statement of our purposes will generally lead to a better evaluation of our activities. A vague statement (or no statement at all) will be very likely to lead to sloppy evaluation . . .[27]

Goodlad points out that more than 30 years ago, Ralph Tyler proposed that principals and teachers have goals made available to them that would "suggest both the kind of behavior students were to develop and the domains of knowledge and human experience likely to be most relevant and vital in their learning."[110] Goodlad agrees that goals are essential. However, he found little evidence of shared goals among teachers and "precious little dialogue about what their schools are for."[110] He contends that the mandate to the schools has been unclear. Further, the responsibility for clarifying that mandate lies with state boards of education, since the Constitution does not give the federal government responsibility for education and schooling, and there is no federal policy with respect to educational goals.

If schools had made it a practice to set goals approved by parents and insisted that what took place in the name of education had to relate to those goals, much of what has recently gone on in the schools that was unacceptable to parents and community members and much of the decline in literacy could have been prevented. Blackington explains why school personnel should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them:

> The behavior of the professional is guided by his concept of service . . . a clear knowledge of the purpose and rules of baseball gives us an understanding of what orders the selection of players and managers and what determines the relationships of owners to managers and players. It also orders the relationships of all to the umpires. All the interactions of those involved are principled by the purpose of the activity. Moreover, our judgments about what constitutes unskilled, unethical, and irrelevant behavior are similarly principled. . . . What is most useful and most interesting is the fact that once one finds the ordering principle, one finds an explanation for much of the behavior of those associated with the activity—be it baseball, or education. In this sense such behavior is reasonable to the extent that it is consistent with its intent or purpose.[27]

Barriers to goal setting. William Hicks and Blackington point out that there is a reluctance to set clear goals because remaining as abstract about educational purposes as possible can be advantageous since setting clear priorities can result in the loss of support from one faction or another. Hicks and Blackington also believe that the lack of clear direction in the schools merely reflects society's lack of consensus about what should be learned and a lack of semantic agreement about the meaning of certain goals. That is, everyone agrees that students should be prepared for their civic responsibility. But what does this mean?[125] Others would say that there is substantial consensus among parents but they have not been consulted—that it is the educators who are in disagreement with the parents and with one another. Hutchins, Ebel, and Hirsch summarize the need to eliminate barriers to goal-setting and to clarify what we want to accomplish:

> [Hutchins:] . . . the job of educational leaders is not to think up educational gimmicks that will deceive the public into supporting things not worth doing, but to explain to the people what education is, why it is important, why it is as important as the founding fathers thought. . . .[136]
>
> [Ebel:] . . . educators ought to be definite and clear about what they are trying to do; what they ought to be trying to do, in the main, is to facilitate the cognitive development of their pupils; and they ought to provide credible evidence of how well they have succeeded in doing that job. These convictions and the proposals growing out of them are so reasonable, and so conducive to excellence in education that they ought not to be controversial. On the other hand, they are so much at variance with current practice in many schools that I suspect they will be controversial.[70]

> [Hirsch:] Adult literacy is a problem that requires decisive leadership at least as much as it requires money. Our illiterate citizens simply do not know the essential background facts and the essential words that represent them. Our schools have not imparted these essential facts and words, because in recent times we have not been willing as a nation to decide what the essential facts and words are. Despite our virtues of diversity and pluralism, our failure to decide upon the core content of cultural literacy has created a positive barrier to adult literacy in this country, and thus a barrier to full citizenship and to full acculturation into our society. The time has come for Americans to be decisive and explicit and specific about the background information that a citizen should know in order to be literate in the 1980s. If we were to act decisively to define cultural literacy then adult literacy would rise as a matter of course.[129]

Improve the Education of Administrators, Principals, and Local School Board Members

Everyone seems to agree that teacher training must be improved. But there is also a need to focus on the training of those in leadership positions in our schools if we are to improve academic results and decrease illiteracy. According to Frank Gobel:

> The quickest and most effective way to change the performance of an organization is to change the performance of its leaders through training and development.[108]

Development of management skills on the part of those responsible for governing schools—board members, treasurers, superintendents, central office staff, and principals—is a unrecognized need. For the most part, these individuals do not have a great deal of training in management concepts and practices; their expertise is in education. These leaders need to improve their evaluation, communication, and human relations skills.

The leaders of the Nation's schools are unable to lead—not because they are incapable, but because they have never been trained in management theory and practice. As Peter Drucker says:

> What the service institutions need is not better people. They need people who do the management job systematically and who focus themselves and their institution purposefully on performance and results. They need effectiveness, emphasis on the right results.[62]

This weakness has persisted because

> . . . nonprofit organizations, especially schools and government, rarely fail if they are inefficient. Such institutions, instead of seeking greater efficiency, tend to increase their budgets.[109]

Furthermore, public attention has been focused on vocal, demanding teachers, law-passing legislatures, and precedent-setting courts, and away from evaluation of school management. The public and the teacher unions tend not to support expenditures for management training because they do not understand the need for it.

Administrators

Resistance to management training for educational administrators results from the perception that they are superfluous and inept. Some are, but most would not be if the public would demand that they manage. People lose sight of the fact that it is the educational administrator and manager who performs the task of making the schools more accountable to the public.

During the prosperous Sixties, Dun and Bradstreet reported that an average of more than 13,000 businesses failed annually and that the majority, 92 percent, of these casualties were due to managerial deficiencies.[109] If the leadership of these companies had been of higher caliber, the ventures might have succeeded. By the same logic, if school leaders had more management expertise, public schools might be more successful. The management function of school administrators has not been addressed because of the folly of refusing to see the $200 billion-dollar education enterprise as a business. This refusal stems partly from ignorance, but mostly from educators who steadfastly insist that educational results cannot be measured. They do so because they cannot comprehend how management techniques can work for them.

We need to address the scarcity of management training opportunities specifically geared toward the needs of public school leaders:

> Only a few years ago, Floyd Marquis, then president of the American Institute of Management, estimated that probably only five to ten percent of business executives had really kept abreast of the exploding knowledge about leadership.[109]

If this is the case in business, then in public service organizations like schools, with no pressure for such training, awareness of leadership training needs is certain to be virtually nonexistent. Further, qualified observers have repeatedly remarked that hospitals, schools, colleges, and the like continue to choose leaders for their technical skills rather than their skills in organizing and leading people.[109]

The public must demand that their educational administrators be good managers, and state boards of education must require management training for them. Certification for administrators must be based on more academic work in colleges of administrative science and less in colleges of education.

Principals

Principals, in particular, must be better trained in effective personnel-and program-evaluation methods. Much has been written lately about how crucial an effective principal can be to successful academic achievement. A good principal must be an effective leader who facilitates positive performance by both pupils and teachers. But principals are not always like this. One reason for weak principals is the tradition of choosing principals from among former teachers who take additional educational courses (not management courses); another is, of course, the dissipation of the authority of the principal's position by court rulings, state and federal mandates and teacher unions.

Board Members

In the published reports on school reform, very little has been said about school boards. Yet they play a key role in the operation of the public schools. Many fine people serve as school board members; it is a little amazing that so many are willing to take so much abuse and work so hard for so little pay. Undoubtedly, most feel a strong sense of commitment to education, but some do not. The problem is that not only is it difficult for the public to distinguish between good board members and poor ones, voters do not realize how important it is to do so. Most communities do not take seriously enough their responsibility to recruit, elect, and support good board members. At election time, voters need to become more sophisticated in evaluating the candidates, as the only other evaluation of a board or its members is that initiated from within—a rare occurrence—and then members are not likely to go about it effectively. Poor board members can cause internal chaos.

Effective board members are aware of what is happening in education both nationally and internationally. However, most board members do not know what information is available, and most administrators do not share resources with them. School board associations should encourage their members to read educational journals and attend meetings of such professional organizations as the American Association of Secondary Administrators and the American Association of Curriculum Development. School board associations should emphasize effective governance by encouraging local boards to write policies, establish short- and long-range district goals, evaluate the superintendent against previously established objectives, and provide for public scrutiny of test score data and curriculum decisions. Boards must insist on accountability for student achievement.

Communities should do more to recognize board accomplishments. They should also hold board members accountable for setting measurable short- and long-range goals, communicating problems and progress, and candidly reporting student achievement. Strong boards, operating effectively, could do much to combat illiteracy.

The Impact of Collective Bargaining on the Educational System

The rise of teacher unions is due in large part to the fact that school boards in the past did not grant adequate due process to teachers and were reluctant to seek additional taxes to fund pay raises. But even if one agrees that teachers were right to demand more due process and more money, and that teacher unions could bring about these results, the nature of current demands and the negative aspects of increased teacher-union activity must be weighed.

The Deepening Adversarial Relationship Between the Teachers and the Board and Administration

When acrimonious debate continues for weeks and months, much energy is drained from the business of educating children. Moreover, administrators are placed in an untenable position: in their role as managers they must support and be accountable to the board, therefore the community, but in their role as educators they must work with the teachers. As the board and the union attempt to defend the correctness of their positions, negative feelings spill over to the students and the community, and sides are chosen. In order to garner and retain teacher support to ratify contracts, the union leaders create a "common enemy." The "them and us" mentality remains long after negotiations have ceased, thus robbing the district of the cooperation necessary to maintain a good educational program—the only reason for the existence of teachers, administrators, and school boards.

The Increased Costs of the Negotiating Process

Enormous costs are involved with negotiators, attorneys, state employment relations boards, state mediation and conciliation services, and the judicial system. For example, Myron Lieberman estimated in 1981 that the cost of collective bargaining to the state of California easily exceeded $150 million annually, noting that:

> It is significant that none of the books and articles advocating public sector bargaining from 1960 to 1980 even raised the matter of costs, although the costs of any system of dispute settlement are an important dimension of its feasibility.[158]

The Possibly Negative Impact on Student Learning

In order for teacher unions to become more successful, teachers were constantly told to consider their best interests—a viewpoint not very compatible with the altruistic motivation historically associated with the teaching profession. Thus

> . . . the traditional view of the teacher as a dedicated scholar who views the transmission of knowledge, understandings, and attitudes as his or her major task, and who finds a sufficient reward in the accomplishment of the task, is completely outdated. Although this traditional picture may have been more romanticized than real, its presence as an ideal did shape students' attitudes toward school and education. As the traditional ideals of teaching have been replaced by the union member modes of thought, students may have less desire to emulate them.[266]

While it may seem far-fetched to some that educational unionism degrades education (and declining achievement is caused by many things together), the fact remains that from 1960 to 1980 the percentage of unionized teachers increased from 4.2 to 72 percent, while average SAT scores dropped from 977 to 890.

Support for and Affiliation with a National Union—an Anathema to Many Americans

As the NEA evolved from a professional teacher association to a labor union, it began espousing beliefs not necessarily endorsed by the rank and file, but with which all teachers are associated. Indeed, the partisan politics of the national leadership of the NEA lessen the credibility of all teachers. Nevertheless, the NEA has become one of the most politically powerful unions in the country, second in size only to the Teamsters.

The political statements of NEA executive directors, and the union's positions on divisive, noneducational issues, put it at odds with the families and communities of many of its members. Union positions on such issues as federal funding for education, gun control, abortion, cessation of aid to Central America, and the nuclear arms freeze destroy any semblance of objectivity and cause great concern to many parents. Because teachers derive their authority from their social function, the further they move away or are perceived to move away from that function, the more they lose their aura of authority.

Chester Finn has accused the NEA of not only turning its back on educational quality, but of taking the opposite approach:

> The NEA and its subdivisions' . . . approach . . . has been to discredit the evidence of qualitative deterioration and the means of acquiring such evidence; to savage the critics of school quality; to mount elaborate campaigns to persuade the public that American education is basically fine, and that any minor problems would be solved by the application of more money; to steadfastly refuse to let teachers be rewarded, (or penalized) on the basis of their own, their pupils', or their schools' performance; to seek control of the agencies and processes by which standards are set for students and teachers alike; and skillfully to employ the rhetoric of educational quality and excellence in advocating policies that would bring about nothing of the sort.[93]

Loss of Public Support for Education

As teacher unions step up their overt political activities and continue to take stands in opposition to prevailing public opinion, the public tends to react negatively. Results of a recent Gallup Poll reflect the public's differences with the unions: 74 percent agreed with the National Commission on Excellence in Education that the quality of education in U.S. public schools is only fair, and not improving (13 percent disagreed); 61 percent felt that teachers should be paid according to their merit (31 percent disagreed); 51 percent favored a voucher system (38 percent did not); 39 percent felt teachers' salaries are too high or about right (35 percent thought they're too low); and overall, 52 percent gave the public schools a grade of C or lower, while 31 percent gave them an A or B. (A more recent poll gives schools higher marks.) With fewer and fewer families having direct contact with the schools because they have no school-aged children, a positive public image becomes more important to the schools. However, as Davies points out:

> If voters perceive unions as attempting to raise salaries but not trying to make any corresponding improvement in the quality of services, then voters perceive the net effect of unions as negative. . . . By continuing aggressively to demand higher salaries without trying to demonstrate any corresponding improvement in services, teachers' unions are acquiring a bad public image.[55]

A 1976 Gallup Poll found that for every three people who thought that unionizing teachers had "helped" the quality of public education, there were five people who thought it had "hurt."[55]

Perhaps Finn sums it up best:

> The long-term strength of public education in a democracy depends on its success in imparting skills, knowledge and fundamental values to children without intruding politics into the schoolhouse. The parent whose child learns to read, write, and reason for himself, to weigh evidence and evaluate ideas, to respect the central tenets of a free society and to honor the terms that make him a member of it, is a parent who is apt to respect the teacher, esteem the school, and willingly pay taxes for the educational system. The parent whose child is taught that he has an obligation to protest—or, for that matter, to support—particular policies and practices that the teacher, or the teacher's national union, happens to dispute, is a parent whose lasting faith in public education dare not be taken for granted.[93]

Analyze the Selection, Training, Compensation, Promotion, and Dismissal of Teachers

To find solutions here we must first clarify our needs, and realize that we need access to information we do not now have. Our concern lies in five areas:

- Attracting qualified people to the profession.
- Providing appropriate and comprehensive training.
- Keeping qualified people in the profession.
- Improving mediocre teachers.
- Dismissing poor teachers.

Attracting Qualified People to the Profession

Lately, a great deal of emphasis is being placed on attracting intelligent people to the teaching profession, and we certainly want to do that. However, we should keep in mind that there are also other qualities necessary for successful teaching—patience, a sense of humor, a desire to work with young people, and the ability to communicate subject matter. In an attempt to improve the quality of teacher candidates, Blackington and Ann Olmsted conducted a 3-year study to determine what type of person enters the teaching profession, and what effect teacher training has. Their findings have interesting implications for the selection and future compensation of teachers.

They identified seven types of people who seek to become elementary teachers:

> *Time servers* are characterized by a lack of concern for their own excellence or their own personal achievement.
>
> *Contented conformists* do what is expected of them conscientiously, and often with skill.
>
> *Task focusers* define their purpose as guiding pupils in mastery of their assignments. School is a serious business for them.
>
> *Pragmatists* are negotiators. They are protected by their adroitness. They prefer quiet horsetrading to dramatic confrontations.
>
> *Child focusers*, as the label implies, are characterized by their single-minded devotion to the pupil as a child, as an unfinished personality whose special needs a teacher must understand and serve. For them, schools really do exist for children.

> *Ambivalents* appear to be individuals who are somehow in transition, for what they do is full of inconsistencies. The disparity between what they believe about children and teaching and what they find to be the reality of the classroom has fragmented their belief system.
>
> *Alienated* seem unable or unwilling to identify with other teachers or to accept the worth of the tasks schools set for children. They are the most heterogeneous of the stance types since the roots of their discontent are so various.[26]

Blackington and Olmsted found that the training students received did not transform or change in any way their original inclinations, but rather clarified their motivations:

> They exited from the program having more or less shaped their work as teachers to their original ideas about teaching, rather than having been transformed by the training process.[26]
>
> This lack of fundamental change in stance type indicates that the students were relatively impervious to any transforming intent embodied in the program as a whole or to any particular teacher or set of teachers within the program. Yet transformation has long been the task assigned to and accepted by educational institutions at all levels.[26]

If educational institutions are unable to change attitudes or transform individuals, then, as these researchers recommend, the challenge is to *select* teacher candidates who have the greatest likelihood for success in working with children. Blackington and Olmsted propose that colleges of education accept only students who are inclined to become Child Focusers, Pragmatists, Task Focusers, and possibly Contented Conformists. They maintain that teachers' characteristics can be predicted, and that improved teacher selection

> . . . may be possible if colleges of education are willing to grapple with the emotionally loaded issue of admission based on noncognitive as well as cognitive criteria.[25]

Structured interviews are used to screen ROTC students, insurance personnel, and teachers, as well as administrators; why not teacher candidates?

To address the problem of low college entrance exam scores of education majors, we might encourage bright young people to become teachers by making their college preparation less expensive. There are a number of ways to accomplish this:

- Provide full scholarships for those with high SAT and ACT scores, requiring students to teach one year for every year of this scholarship.
- Reduce the years of college required for teachers from four to three, with more concentration on content. The fourth year would be the equivalent of student teaching and methods courses, but would instead be a year of internship in a school.
- Allow those with two-year or associate degrees to teach in some reduced capacity (as an assistant or aide) while offering them fee waivers to continue their education in the summers.

Providing Appropriate and Comprehensive Training

Poor teacher training is of such concern that the executives of eight leading educational organizations recently held conferences to discuss solutions to the problem and publish their findings.[99] The situation also led Senator Edward Zorinsky to introduce a bill in Congress that would establish a commission to investigate teacher training. Included in this investigation are to be the balance between content and methodology courses, how teachers are taught to teach reading and the effectiveness of those methods, and the degree to which training inadequacies have contributed to illiteracy.

Teachers have complained bitterly for years of the time wasted in required certification courses. The problem seems to be the excessive amount of time required for method courses—robbing students of time that could be better spent elsewhere—and the fact that so much of what is discussed is not applicable to the actual classroom.

When emphasis shifted from the intellectual training of the child to the development of the whole child, teacher training began to emphasize pedagogy more and rigorous subject matter preparation less. State boards of education need to re-evaluate their certification and accreditation standards to insure that teachers are competent in their subjects and prepared sufficiently, but not excessively, in pedagogy. State departments of education must insure that their evaluations of the colleges and universities they accredit are effective.

While we do want to strengthen the teacher-certification process if we are to rely on it, another way we might provide better teachers is to allow those with good educations in other fields to teach. Recent college graduates could be included along with community members who would like to change careers, and those who take early retirement from other professions. Many people have a strong desire to teach. Former teachers who have allowed their certification to lapse—particularly those bright women who taught in the Fifties and Sixties, then left to rear families—might be enticed to return, especially if they were allowed flexible schedules or part-time positions.

Keeping Qualified People in the Profession

The popular notion is that individuals do not enter or remain in the profession because salaries are too low, and that, therefore, more money will solve the problem. The situation is more complex than that. Does any valid research show that paying teachers more improves student learning, or that not paying them more causes students to learn less? Average teachers' 1982-83 salaries in the U.S. range from $14,285 to $33,953 in the 50 states. Does any evidence show that in those states paying higher salaries, a greater percentage of students are achieving their potential than in those states paying less? Teaching salaries are not comparable to those in many other fields, but the fact that the academic demands in these other fields may be more rigorous and that teachers are generally in the classroom only 180 days of 365 receives little comment. In constant dollars, teachers' salaries increased 72 percent between 1952 and 1978, compared to the 52-percent average increase for all of private industry: in constant 1978 dollars, teachers' salaries averaged $13,392, compared to $13,263 in private industry, $12,512 for other state and local government salaries, $11,588 for federal military salaries, and $18,948 for federal civilian salaries.[100] Furthermore, such analysis does not usually compare fringe benefits. Research is needed to compare hourly wages and fringe benefits in education with those in other fields, and to assess the rigor of study required for teaching in relation to other professions.

We must also consider that during this period more money than ever before was being spent on education, which enabled us to have fewer students and smaller classes. Yet we experienced achievement decline. Lack of money is undoubtedly a factor in some instances of educational decline. But since employee salaries and fringe benefits consume 80-85 percent of most school budgets (and are, therefore, the main reason for the escalating cost of education), further increases in teachers' salaries should depend upon a thorough analysis of their true compensation. The point is that some teachers are underpaid, but others aren't. Blanket solutions in this area are not sufficient; throwing more money at all teachers will not necessarily guarantee improved student performance.

Abraham Maslow believes that people are motivated by certain needs until those needs are met; then they are motivated by other, more elevated, needs. According to his theory, some teachers would be motivated by money and tenure, some by status and recognition, and some by the opportunity and challenge to do the very best job they could. Surveys asking individual teachers what does and would motivate them seem a good place to begin an analysis of teacher-retention.

For teachers who most want a different challenge or more status, *career ladders* with incremental salary ranges could be established. How quickly one moved through the categories and up the salary range would depend on teacher effort and student performance, not just the length of time employed and the number of college courses completed. In-service training geared to the needs of the district and available from a variety of sources should be required for teacher advancement.

Those at the top of the career ladder—"master teachers"—should be allowed the option of remaining in the classroom fulltime, or teaching part-time and serving in other capacities (such as mentors for new or marginal teachers, department heads, or consultants for other districts as well as their own). To encourage teachers who might respond to the stick rather than the carrot, no teacher should be allowed to move up the salary scale automatically or remain at the top if performance is mediocre. Therefore, automatic salary increments should be abolished.

In addition to career ladders, various systems of *merit bonuses* or merit pay might be used to reward good performance, or to stimulate the improvement of poor or average performance. In Japan, in addition to yearly increases, there is a system of special salary increases offered to those who have performed outstandingly. Merit pay was apparently the norm in the U.S. before the 1920s. A small percentage of districts have used it in recent years.[252]

In a recent survey of 1200 superintendents by the American Association of School Administrators, 80 percent (960) indicated they support merit pay; however, three-fourths of them had not discussed implementation of a merit pay plan with their school boards.

According to the Gallup Poll, 61 percent of Americans favored merit pay in 1983, as did 58 percent in 1971. Yet, no states have policies regarding extra compensation for outstanding performance, although 35 states do have some form of merit salary system for some public employees.[252] State boards of education should take the lead in this area.

Some merit systems have failed because of poor planning, but some have met with great resistance because educators do not feel that performance can be measured. It is not that performance cannot be measured, it is that teachers and their unions have strongly resisted measurement, and administrators, not well trained in evaluating, have been reluctant to create conflict. Yet:

> The key to any method of linking pay to performance, most agree, is an even-handed evaluation system based on an objective set of standards. The failure of past merit-pay plans to accomplish either of these, many say, illustrates the serious failure of school systems to ensure that teaching standards are being maintained in their schools, that teachers are being helped to improve their work, and that incompetent people are removed from classrooms.
>
> . . . Those who are doing the observation—usually school principals—are poorly prepared for the task . . . and the evaluation forms they use are superficial.[252]

Improving Performance and Dismissing Poor Teachers

Toledo (Ohio) Public Schools is a school system that is attempting to address these issues. Representatives of the local affiliate of AFT and members of the central office administration worked out a plan whereby they agree on which teachers need help. Identified teachers are assigned a successful teacher who works with them for a year or more before they are either reassigned, terminated, or released from the program with improved teaching skills. Teachers strongly support the program.

Because effective evaluations are the key to rewarding good teachers and eliminating poor instruction, attention must be focussed on this area and resistance to evaluations removed. Consequently, the whole issue of tenure should be re-examined. Tenure was originally established to guarantee academic freedom, but has instead become a protection for academic license and a virtual guarantee of a job regardless of performance. It may no longer be necessary anyway, with the extensive due process teachers now enjoy by law. Certainly, tenure, while it had a noble intent, has been debased by those who are unwilling or unable to carry out effective evaluations. School boards should hold the superintendent responsible for principal evaluation of teachers, as well as provide the support and resources needed for good performance. The courts should not insist on excessive due process, the legislatures should reduce red tape and insure that negotiated agreements and unions cannot control the evaluation process. The public should demand effective evaluations. Substantial progress in the crucial area of evaluation could help regain public support and improve the prestige of the teaching profession, thereby attracting better and more highly qualified people.

We must also recognize that many skilled teachers lose students, just as many skilled physicians lose patients, through no fault of their own. Careful analysis of this dimension must be included in any fair evaluation of teaching efforts.

Koerner sums up:

> . . . we need to avoid misplaced emotion or sentiment about teachers and teaching. There are time servers enough in the ranks of teachers and administrators; there are many working well below their capacities; there are many who are paid as much as or more than they could command in other jobs; . . . And then there are plenty of teachers and administrators in the wide middle range of talent and dedication who will respond if encouraged, or if necessary prodded, to do a better job of basic education. . . . There are also those skilled and devoted teachers and administrators who day after day do the grueling work of good teaching and administering. It is a demanding and exhausting job that should be rewarded accordingly. . . . Let us by all means honor those who are doing a difficult job well, and at the same time try to change those who are doing it poorly.[148]

We should also keep in mind that teachers, whatever their talents, can be strongly reinforced with high-quality materials, usable courses of study, effective evaluations, and the positive learning environment facilitated by supportive discipline policies consistently enforced by the building principal.

In order to provide the best personnel possible. state boards of education and state legislatures must have the courage and persistence to make necessary changes in teacher training and career progression.

Further Examine the Federal Role in Education

We concur with the apparent consensus that state and local governments are mainly responsible for education in this country. And we believe that the role of the federal government should be objectively analyzed. As Finn points out, "The potomacentrism of American education is weakening."[92] The renewed seriousness about education has not come about because of influence from Washington except for *A Nation at Risk*, but rather because governors, state legislatures, and state boards of education have responded to public demand. "We seem to be remembering that school standards are ultimately the responsibility of ordinary mortals," says Finn, "not Washington Wizards."[92] Perhaps the question should be, what can the federal government do that the state and local governments cannot do? Provide research, leadership, funding, national standards?

Research

Congress addressed the need for research when it established the National Institute of Education (NIE) over a decade ago. Nearly a billion dollars later, one is hard-pressed to find how education has improved as a result. Finn, one of the developers of the idea of NIE and one of its early supporters, says the NIE should be disbanded because

- Rather than functioning as a quasi-independent agency with distinguished scholars at its helm, its policy direction comes from budget examiners, diverse political assistants, and meddlesome congressional aides.
- Ideology has become the principal determinant of the NIE Research Agenda. In recent years the question of equity was nearly the exclusive criterion by which to judge which projects warranted support.
- The resources of NIE have been captured by a group of educational R & D organizations that have gained a strangle-hold on the annual appropriation through adroit manipulation of key members of Congress. Others maintain that educational research should be left to the colleges and universities and private foundations with the federal role being one of disseminating it.[94]

Lawrence Uzzell urges that the U.S. Department of Education eliminate those programs that most readily lend themselves to ideological manipulation:

> Agencies like the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Library of Education can stay; those like the National Institution of Education . . . must go. . . .
>
> Education research will not vanish if federal subsidies are cut to zero. More than 400 American colleges and universities have education departments, and there are scores of other institutions like the Ford Foundation and the Council for Basic Education which flourished long before the NIE.
>
> What would vanish with the NIE is the highly offensive practice whereby some citizens force others to subsidize ideological propaganda disguised as science.[264]

We feel these criticisms merit public examination. Perhaps some new semi-autonomous agency headed by respected scholars should be accountable for the quality and dissemination of national research.

Leadership

We view national leadership as having two important functions: elevating education to the national focus it should have, and providing appropriate legislation—which may mean no legislation. The President and Congress have already begun to give more of their attention to education. As mentioned earlier, that focus should be continued.

Simply put, our national leaders need to reexamine educational legislation and reauthorize that which will improve cost-effective student achievement. Such legislation might include providing an equal amount for each child for textbooks and standardized tests, providing scholarships for top SAT and ACT scorers (perhaps in return for a stipulated time in teaching), establishing national reading levels or tests for 3rd-, 5th-, and 8th-graders, and encouraging state legislatures to fund uniform salary scales and reexamine teacher tenure. These leaders cannot let themselves be unduly influenced by the more than

1000 educational lobbyists working Washington, D.C.[185] They must have the courage to do what is best for students, even when it will not gain votes and support from special interests.

Funding

Some people react to any criticism of education with a call for more money—especially federal funds with no strings attached. Others call for a realignment of funding. Expenditures for education have greatly increased in recent years: personnel increased 250 percent from 1952 to 1978, while pupil enrollment increased only 90 percent—a drop in the employee-student ratio from 1:14.8 to 1:8. Still, student achievement has declined. Other comparisons for the 25-year period follow:

	1952	*1978*
Government expenditure for education in millions of dollars	$8,347	$120,823
in % of GNP	2.4%	5.7%
Enrollment in public education, percent of U.S. population	17.8%	24.2%
Employees in public education percent of employment in U.S.	3.0%	6.8%
Employees per 100 students	6.8%	12.5%
Average annual earnings per full-time employee		
in state and local education	$3,169	$13,392
in all government	3,269	13,758
in private industry	3,490	13,261
Average cost per student	301	2,288
Percentages of increase (in constant dollars)		
Government expenditure for education (millions)		+487%
in state and local education		+ 72%
in all government		+ 70%
in private industry		+ 55%
Average cost per student		+219%

(Table from: *The Wayward Welfare State*, Roger A. Freeman, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1981.)

Freeman estimates that educational institutions in the United States now spend 7.5 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP), compared with 4.1 percent for those in the Soviet Union; whereas the U.S.S.R. allocates 13 percent of its GNP for military expenditures, compared with 5 percent in the U.S.A.[100] Tyler estimates that the total percentage of our GNP spent on education is closer to 10 percent.

> No other developed nation devotes as much of its total production to the support of schools and colleges. The annual expenditure per student enrolled is also the highest in history. Many educators—accustomed to more prosperous times—mistakenly equate today's budgetary leveling off due to declining enrollments to diminished financial support.[269]

The last chapter of *New Dimensions of the Federal State Partnership in Education*, entitled "Productivity in Elementary and Secondary Education Programs," presents provocative statements about federal funding from several authors:

> There is mounting concern over whether government programs have yielded payoffs commensurate with their costs.
>
> There is no positive relation between the total cost of the personnel and other resources used in instruction and growth in achievement.
>
> The record suggests that schools, wittingly or not, do not use available resources in a productive manner. It is clearly easier to request additional funds than to know how to use them effectively.
>
> It clearly cannot be assumed that either state and local educational agencies, or federal bureaus in their interaction with the state and local levels, have natural incentives to spend funds productively. The incentives are generally to spend more money, not to produce more learning for the money spent.[182]

David Seeley says that:

> State and federal education programs are unproductive in part because they focus on the *delivery of educational* services rather than the *improvement of learning*. Most citizens assume that the major purpose of the programs is to improve learning. Most programs, however, are actually designed to produce increased or "improved" educational services. These services are expected to increase learning, but may not actually do so. This is a major source of frustration about the programs, and a major source of confusion about goals, purposes and productivity.
>
> . . . The problem is that when service delivery programs fail to produce improved learning, the tendency is to try to remedy the problem by delivering more services, instead of trying to correct the problems that made the services unproductive in the first place. This, of course, only further increases costs and reduces productivity.[182]

Yet in 1979, the NEA asked for $50 billion or more by 1985—an increase of 50 percent in federal spending. The NEA continues to call for more teachers and smaller classes, even though research does not support these measures to improve achievement. Undoubtedly, at a time of declining enrollments, more jobs can be protected with smaller teacher-pupil ratios. Moreover, teachers have found it increasingly difficult to maintain order without smaller classes in the permissive school climate we have been experiencing. And with fewer students, it is easier to teach heterogeneously grouped classes of widely varying abilities. One author estimates that we could reduce staffs by one third if we reinstituted ability grouping.[100] Since personnel costs consume approximately 80 percent of school budgets, the potential savings are easy to imagine; equally important, many feel that students would gain from such a change. One metropolitan city estimates that every time the teacher-pupil ratio is reduced by one student, the cost of the district is raised by an additional $1 million annually. The schools in many foreign countries have more students per class than those in the United States. Until recently, Japan had a teacher-pupil ratio of 1-45; it has since dropped to 1-40.[75] Cuba's is 1-35.[192]

We are not advocating larger classes and ability grouping here. We only ask that before any consideration is given to federal funding for teacher salaries, the controversial topics of student/teacher ratio and ability grouping be opened to public discussion, rather than decided upon solely by education professionals; that research be closely and objectively examined; and that finally, *for once*, discussion of class size include the cost factor.

Another question that should be addressed is whether the method of allocating federal funds can be improved. According to Roger Freeman:

> Every year since 1965, ESEA has been supporting projects in about 14,000 school systems, involving 7 to 9 million children with an aggregate cost which by now exceeds $30 billion. . . . On the assumption that all children of low income parents are behind educationally, and that all lagging children come from low income homes, the law distributes federal funds by the number of poor families. According to the law's preamble, it aims to aid "areas with concentrations of children from low income families." But funds are distributed to nearly 91 percent of all school systems and to 95 percent of all counties. If that is concentration, then we may wonder what a wide dispersal would look like.[100]

Freeman stresses that achievement differences are wider *within* than *among* schools. Federal officials should more carefully monitor the educational results of this spending.

Seeley notes that the number of children participating in special education programs increased from 5.9 percent in 1972 to 9.5 percent in 1979—an increase so dramatic that some states have put ceilings on the proportion of children that can be included in such programs. Compare these percentages with those of a recently released University of California medical study, which shows that 2 percent of the babies born in America in 1950 suffered from physical abnormalities, mental retardation, or learning problems, and that about 4 percent this year will be born with these defects. Some feel that many low-ability students are designated as learning disabled in order to qualify for funding, and because regular classroom teachers are unable or unwilling to serve them.

Another area that needs examination is vocational education. Receiving $700 million a year, it is one of the federal government's largest areas of educational subsidy. Overall, the 17 million vocational education students cost taxpayers $6.7 billion a year. Gilbert Sewell reminds us that the American Vocational Association is the oldest educational special interest group, dating from 1917, and that it is very powerful and well lodged in the halls of government.

A newly-released study by the U.S. Labor Department of employer attitudes toward vocational education found that:

- 63 percent of employers rated good work habits as a more important factor in job success than technical skills or speaking and mathematical abilities.
- Only about 21 percent of the employers said they pay higher salaries to entry-level workers who have had prior vocational training.
- There is little demand for entry-level workers with vocational training; more than two-thirds of the employers surveyed preferred to do their own training of entry-level workers.
- Originally, vocational training was more aligned with the academic program because educators believed academics would help students learn abstract reasoning but over the years the emphasis shifted to job training.[141]

The author of this study concludes that educational resources spent on vocational education may be better used to teach kids how to read, write, and think.

Criticisms of vocational education include:

- Extreme unevenness in the provision of good vocational education programs, with those in the comprehensive high schools most in need of institutional reform.
- Lack of high-quality programs for disadvantaged students.
- Tenured teachers who are unwilling to respond to changes in the workplace.
- Outmoded courses.
- Duplication of effort.
- Insufficient grounding in the skills that enable workers to benefit from rapid on-the-job training.[218, 230]

We are not agreeing that these criticisms are valid, but rather acknowledging that the charges are serious enough and the expenditures great enough to merit an independent study in this area. We also acknowledge that there are countless individual vocational education success stories as well as high percentages of job placement in many areas. Our recommendations for improvement include: a vocational education voucher plan for students; allowing school superintendents to hire part-time vocational teachers from industry.[218]

The solution to the achievement problem may not, in fact, lie in spending any additional federal dollars. Ralph Tyler makes the point that more funding might even be detrimental:

> During times of material affluence we become engrossed in pursuing dollars; but when dollars are not available we seek, if we are wise, to raise the quality of education and attack some of the serious problems we face.[259]

He observes that historic reforms in education have usually taken place in periods of fiscal recession. A recent editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* summarized the feelings of many.

> Let's get a few things straight about spending. Between 1970 and 1981, federal tax collections from individual incomes rose more than 300 percent to $333 billion, personal tax payments to states and localities went up 380 percent and property taxes doubled. In large part this money paid for the Great Society's inflation-indexed entitlements programs. In other words, taxpayers gave the advocates of these programs the wherewithal to create the kind of society they wanted; the problem was not that the taxpayers were stingy, it was that the programs were misguided.

> We have little doubt that most people are willing to entertain the idea of spending more money on their children's education—if they get their money's worth. And there is evidence that the process of putting quality back into education is under way in many places. But as the siren's song goes up again, promising smarter children in return for more money, we suggest that parents reply: Reform now, money later.[279]

We do believe that federal funds should be provided where federal mandates affect state and local finances. However, all future funding should be directly related to improving student achievement. With only one-fourth of the families in this country having school-aged children, taxpayers are not going to continue to support substantial expenditures without effective cost return. How can our economy permit it?

The entire educational establishment should be scrutinized. The President should convene a panel of financial experts, as he has done in other areas, to look at how educational funds are spent, to recommend improvements, and to establish credibility for effective programs. Areas that should be scrutinized include: employee-pupil ratio, vocational and technical education, compliance with governmental regulations, and special education. Perhaps the task force could make recommendations from the dollar-and-cents standpoint of return on investment to insure that expensive educational practices are validated by results and only continued by conscious decision.

CONCLUSION

This report was several months in the writing but many years in the making.

Obviously, as we have pointed out, concern, confusion, and discontent exist regarding educational achievement in this country. We believe the primary focus of the schools should be on literacy attainment, as literacy is basic to all else; that the emphasis should be on prevention and intervention rather than remediation; and that solutions will be possible only if the barriers to them are understood and removed.

Not only is less-than-full literacy costly in dollars, it is costly in its waste of human resources. In addition to the many other problems it creates, adult illiteracy denies its victims the subtlety of communication necessary for effective political discussion. It is a barrier to full acculturation into our society, full citizenship, and true freedom. We must constantly remind ourselves that a literate citizenry is the root of and route to a successful democracy.

Solutions to literacy problems are not impossible or necessarily elusive, but we must understand that there will be opposition to real reform. Realizing this, we must wonder if the problem of illiteracy persists because of resistance to solutions rather than disagreement about causes!

The educational establishment is firmly entrenched and resistance to change is great. We are not only a Nation at risk, but a Nation at a loss about how to minimize the risk. Perhaps we do not lack the means, but rather the will to do what we should.

Yet, we are optimistic about the heightened national emphasis on educational issues, particularly literacy, the apparent agreement both within and without the education profession that something must be done; and the considerable movement to improve the schools which has already taken place. However, given the history of educational change in this country we are pessimistic, because it is almost inevitable that the educational pendulum will begin to swing in the opposite direction. And, given the shortness of our national attention span, we may experience more heat than light, resulting in more motion than action.

For instance, the most recent Gallup Poll shows that 42 percent of the general public now give their local public schools a grade of A or B (an increase of 9 percent from 1983), and 50 percent give local teachers a grade of A or B (up 11 percent from 1981). Although some reforms were underway before the latest rash of reports, has there really been that much improvement? Although we have increased requirements, assigned more homework, and instituted minimum standards, are our students really learning more? Do we know? Increased requirements will not help if we water down content in the courses. More homework will not help if it is busy work that is not checked and does not enlighten the student. Minimum standards will not help if effective intervention does not take place when needed. Does this poll mean that the schools really have improved that much, or only that the public perception is different because of changes that have been made but not evaluated?

How do we find the answers? By instituting measures of accountability that include a record of student progress and an analysis of cost effectiveness. We can no longer accept the premises that student achievement cannot be measured, that findings cannot be compared to determine what works and what doesn't, or that the current methods of spending educational dollars are sacrosanct. We must scrutinize our entire educational delivery system and focus on *learner outcomes* in order to determine what increases or decreases achievement. If the necessary changes are not made, we must determine what barriers prevent those changes and remove them.

Summary of the Stated and Implied Recommendations in the Report

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Improve the teaching of reading.
2. More strictly evaluate educational materials, and re-examine the selection process. Materials should be sufficiently challenging to students.
3. Upgrade curricula.
4. While continuing the emphasis on basic skills, the curricula must include the teaching of higher-order skills.
5. Examine use of student time—of time required for assignments in light of what is learned as well as the structure of the school day, (i.e., time on task).
6. The time and expense required for individualized instruction — a growing trend — should be carefully analyzed in order to determine whether this method is an effective use of instructional time and the educational dollar.
7. Evaluate the results of preschool education to determine whether the gains are sustainable and how the programs should be funded.

8. The kindergarten year should have increased academic content.
9. Meaningful homework should be consistently assigned beginning in the early years of school. It should be systematically collected, and checked, and should determine to some extent — however small — what a student's grade in any given course will be.
10. The value of work, good study habits, a positive attitude, an appreciation of learning, self-discipline, and ethical behavior should be incorporated into the curricula, especially in the early years of school.
11. Re-establish the school's authority to demand and maintain discipline.
12. Require pre-kindergarten screening procedures to identify special strengths and needs, especially deterrents to reading ability, and provide assistance when necessary. Children who enter school with advanced skills should not be allowed to stagnate while others catch up.
13. Comprehensive testing programs should be instituted to monitor student achievement, especially in relation to student potential. Remediation or intervention, particularly in the early years, must be available for those who need it.
14. Tests that include accurate identification of underachievers should be administered, and the results effectively utilized.
15. Students should not move through the grades without mastering the necessary skills. The mastery learning programs currently in use should be carefully evaluated since there is not a consensus concerning their effectiveness in providing basic skills instruction.
16. Parents should have candid and thorough reports of their children's academic progress — reports which are based not only on how students are achieving according to the demands of the curriculum, but how they are achieving in comparison to their peers. Otherwise, parents will not have a realistic assessment of their children's progress.
17. Reestablish credibility in the measurement of academic progress.
18. Encourage and honor young scholars and artists as much as we do young athletes; give scholarships to top ACT and SAT scorers.
19. State departments of education should compile a list of all competitions, scholarships, grants, and contests and disseminate it to local school districts.
20. Our nation would be better served were greater effort given to meeting the needs of gifted and academically talented students.

The Teaching Profession

21. State boards of education should accept the responsibility for upgrading standards for teacher certification and accreditation. They should be aware of how teachers are trained to teach reading and review the results of this training.
22. Greater flexibility is needed to allow graduates with demonstrated knowledge in their fields, but without the required hours in education courses, to teach other than basic skills.
23. Separate certification should be established for middle-school teachers to include required training in the problems of early adolescence.
24. Improve the screening of teacher candidates.
25. In-service programs should be structured around the needs of individual districts. Training in the teaching of higher-order skills is one area of need.
26. Compensation should be based on the teacher's ability to teach, as well as on years of schooling. Other incentives for retaining teachers should be instituted. Automatic salary increases should be abolished.
27. The issue of tenure should be more thoroughly discussed. Perhaps it would not be necessary if due process were incorporated into the dismissal procedure and both teachers and administrators were given clearly articulated, performance-related criteria against which they would be evaluated.
25. Decisions determining the appropriate subjects for, as well as the timing and duration of, negotiations between teacher unions and local boards should be open to the public. The total percentage of salary increase—including fringe benefits and increments — should be published, as well as top salaries instead of only beginning salaries. The cost of negotiating, itself, should be closely monitored.
29. The negotiation process must be shortened to make it less disruptive.
30. The effect of teacher unions on education should be thoroughly studied and reported.

Local Administration

31. Administrators and principals need better training and in-service programs, especially in the areas of evaluating personnel and developing in-service programs for staff.
32. Principals should establish themselves as educational leaders and give more attention to the curriculum.
33. Administrators' pay should be based on merit.
34. Apprenticeship programs and in-service training should be provided to school board members.
35. School board associations should help their members understand how to govern their districts effectively, and require accountability to the voters for student achievement.
36. The impact of the federal role in education on local school governance should be thoughtfully reviewed.
37. More effort should be made to identify and remove barriers to the reforms that would make the public school system more responsive and accountable.
38. Local school boards need more authority to govern their districts effectively.
39. School boards should represent parents more forcefully in decisions affecting student performance, including amount of homework, difficulty of materials, report card format, length of the school day, and requirements for graduation.
40. School boards should publicize clearly articulated policies and short- and long-range goals. They should base their evaluations of superintendents on how well their policies are implemented and their goals are achieved.
41. The policies and goals of the district school board should be reflected in the curriculum.

42. State legislatures should review and simplify their education codes.

Research

43. Evaluate the process of commissioning educational research and determine whether or not the federal government should be involved.
44. Valid research is needed in many areas, such as what motivates children to learn, how children learn, and the impact of drug use on the ability to learn.
45. The relationship between the economy and the literacy level of the populace must be clarified. Will increased literacy improve the economy? Would more people be productively employed if job requirements were not inflated, requiring degrees and levels of literacy unnecessary to the tasks?
46. Broader dissemination of good, workable ideas is needed; the National Diffusion Network could be expanded.
47. Funding should be provided for the dissemination of research findings to classroom teachers, administrators, and school board members.
48. School leaders should study the research on the "effective school" movement and emulate its successes.

The System and Structure of Education

49. National standards should be determined for certain skill levels — especially reading, writing, and math. Regardless of what tests are used, each school should report the degree to which students are meeting those national standards so that parents and teachers will be able to put student achievement into perspective. Since it is the only instrument currently readily available nationwide, perhaps all graduating seniors should take the GED test in order to provide national assessment data.
50. State standards for evaluating schools and school districts should be reviewed and, if necessary, improved.
51. Pilot projects should be implemented that allow children to begin school when they are deemed ready, regardless of chronological age, in order to determine whether students learn more under such circumstances, and whether later social problems are decreased by such a system.
52. More public discussion about the purpose and performance of the public schools is needed. Parents must have a larger role in the decision-making process, especially in reaching a consensus about what should be taught. This could be accomplished through a parent council in each school.
53. Competition in the educational marketplace, by use of vouchers and tuition tax credits that would be fair to those of all income levels should be fairly and unemotionally evaluated. If found to improve schooling, they should be encouraged.
54. The reasons for and results of student drop-outs need more comprehensive study, and more attention. Allowing students to enter adult basic education classes at younger ages may be one solution.
55. Alternatives to compulsory education, such as apprenticeships, should be examined.
56. Drop-outs should be allowed to return to finish school at any time, free of charge. Everyone should be entitled to complete the equivalent of 13 years of free schooling (kindergarten through 12th grade).
57. The determination of future work-force needs and the skills that will be needed for employment, require closer cooperation between business and education.
58. Employers' emphasis on the diploma for entry into the job market should be accompanied by equal emphasis on the academic skills necessary for successful employment.
59. There should be more communication between business and education. Teachers should incorporate understanding of the needs of the work force into their lessons.

National Attitudes Toward Education

60. In order for schools to become accountable for student achievement, several factors must be identified: what changes are needed, who should make them, any barriers to making the changes and the removal of such barriers.
61. The public needs to become more aware of and involved in the educational system, and to make its opinions known to elected representatives.
62. The President and the Secretary of Education should continue to focus national attention on the status of education in America.
63. Lawmakers, educators, and others must resist the temptation to apply quick fixes and must not succumb to excessive pressure from special interest groups; instead, short- and long-range planning to improve education for all is needed.
64. A presidential task force should be appointed to study the expenditure of federal education funds and school tax dollars to determine: (a) why many consider educational funding insufficient, even though funding has increased while enrollment has declined; (b) what areas are underfunded or overfunded; and (c) whether any savings can be realized.
65. Decision-makers within the commercial television industry must weigh carefully the short- and long-range ramifications of programming on the values and behavior of young people. They especially need to distinguish clearly between the portrayal of adult and youthful behavior and depict more young people who work hard and excel. A national study of the effects of television on youth should be conducted.

Illiteracy

66. It is respectfully recommended that the President or the Congress appoint a national task force to determine how reading is being taught, how reading should be taught, and how reading teachers are trained.
67. The discussion of how to teach reading should be expanded beyond the domain of educators to include the public.

68. National definitions of the various levels of literacy must be established and better data-gathering procedures instituted. More accurate estimates would enable legislators to better determine: (a) how many of those eligible for adult basic education would refuse and how many would benefit from training; and (b) considering the return on the investment, whether we are spending enough on local, state, and national levels to combat adult illiteracy.
69. The military's research on illiteracy should be studied and relevant findings incorporated into current public education programs.
70. Attention should be given to illiterate adults on welfare. The possibility of requiring them to take advantage of educational opportunities in order to remove themselves from the welfare rolls should be considered.
71. Consideration could be given to shortening prison sentences somewhat for illiterate inmates who successfully complete reading programs.

REFLECTIONS OF A COMMITTEE MEMBER

We are numbered among typical Americans who believe that schooling can cure society's ills. We do indeed argue for more schooling on the grounds that it will "preserve democracy, eliminate poverty, lower the crime rate, enrich the common culture, reduce unemployment," etc., etc., etc. We believe this because every human accomplishment proves it.

The United States of America caused a world revolution when it established public schooling for every child. Even if the ideal was not fully realized, the idea that, regardless of family status, each child is entitled to education, started mankind on a march toward human dignity that continues throughout the world—and we are the better for it. Despite world wars and nuclear forces, we are the better for it.

Many authors have commented on the phenomenon that, beginning in the late 19th century and continuing throughout this century, after thousands of years of slow progress, the progress of humanity has been breath-taking . . . awesome. It has not been mere coincidence that this period of rapid progress coincided with the growth of freely accessible public education.

Though we recognize the great accomplishments of our educational system, and are confident that it will again right itself, we must nevertheless agree that our public education system has floundered badly over the last several decades.

Early in the proceedings of this Council (as it was constituted more than 3 years ago) we were told by experts in adult basic education that a substantial number of the adults born and reared in the United States is illiterate—"hard-core illiterates." This information surprised and shocked several Council members. While we could not establish a specific number, investigation disclosed the probability that this core was growing both in number and in percentage of the nation's population. Educators frankly admitted that efforts to motivate that hard core to take advantage of the Nation's adult basic education system had not been successful. Educators agreed that their lack of success in attracting this hard-core group probably meant that there were more native-born 16-year-olds leaving school illiterate than were gaining literacy through our Adult Basic Education System. We were assured by the experts that most of this hard core has the inherent capacity to learn.

This information was somewhat terrifying: unless something could be done to reduce the continuing supply of adult illiterates, the Adult Basic Education System might soon be overwhelmed.

The Council needed to know why so many young adults who had completed 10 or more years in public school lacked the simple ability to read, write, and compute. Only by learning causes could we hope to suggest remedies. Thus the Literacy Committee of the Council, which was originally formed to study hard-core adult illiteracy, was led to examine the public school system and publish this report.

Our report indicates that the well-known law of physics—that every action initiates a reaction—applies to social structures such as schools. The report establishes that well-intentioned innovations caused calamities because the sponsors failed to anticipate the inevitable reactions.

The report also indicates that, despite the national concensus that education is worthwhile, no such concensus exists on the goals to be achieved by education. This confusion is aggravated by differing perceptions about educational results, well-demonstrated by the contrast between two rather recent publications. The National Commission on Excellence in Education wrote, "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." However, in an article "The Good News About Our Public Schools," which appeared in the 1 January 1984 edition of *Parade* magazine, Marguerite Michaels says:

> In 1786 Thomas Jefferson equated education with democracy. "No other sure foundation," he said "can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness." Nearly 200 years later we have never been closer to that ideal. According to Census Bureau figures, the average American citizen is better educated today than he was a generation ago—more literate, more exposed to mathematics, literature and science. In the last 20 years we have opened our minds—with new educational research—to the idea that children learn equally, regardless of race or sex.

If we lack concensus about the goals for or results of public education, why did we make it compulsory? To supply baby sitters on a national basis? Hardly. To keep children out of the labor market until they are 16? Scarcely, since much of the child labor law was enacted to take children out of factories and put them into schools.

It seems obvious that the idea of compulsory education was prompted by the same high ideals of human dignity and equality that made our public school system available to all. Government realized that some illiterate parents might not recognize the value of education and that selfish or evil parents might be indifferent or opposed to the education of their children. Government decided that despite one's parents each child should have the opportunity for education. Why? The answer cannot be "for a better citizenry," because such would have the individual serving the needs of the Nation, and, fundamentally, this Nation exists to serve the needs of the individual. The paramount importance of each individual also eliminates as possible reasons for compulsory education the needs of industry, the military, and so forth.

Then why? The answer has to be the right to make choices. With the wonderful redundancy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," this nation proclaimed that its inhabitants could do what they choose to do so long as they do not interfere with others' freedom of choice and do not injure the common good. People flocked to these shores on the strength of this promise, and they and our country prospered.

Our children are required to go to school so that they will be educationally franchised—so they will know that there are a variety of paths open to them. The freedom to choose is their inalienable right. Education does not guarantee judgment, but it should point out alternatives and indicate the requirements for achievement. When a child has completed compulsory education, the child should be able to read, write, compute, and use a dictionary and a library well enough to find out what he can lawfully do if the spirit moves him. An individual should know that paths are open to increasing opportunity, not just for occupational training but for all of life's interests.

Compulsory education should also exist to teach the fundamental structure of our government and a love of nation, because democracy offers the best hope for human dignity. And when the pundits ask "whose values are to be taught?" the response should be "the values of those who recognized the dignity of humanity, the importance of the individual, and the wonder of education."

Is it ridiculous to set such a high standard as a goal for compulsory education when we have been unable to achieve even functional literacy? We think not. Part of our problem has been a tendency to lower goals in all phases of life—and lowered goals result in lower accomplishment. Furthermore, if such a standard had achieved national concensus, teachers would have known what was expected of them, and would not have permitted the deviations from purpose that have proved absurd.

Consequently a national concensus is critical—but not one achieved by federal fiat (God forbid!), nor by federal bribery through allotments or grants, but rather by discussion and persuasion, a process similar to the way in which many uniform statutes have been adopted by the states.

Another reason for compulsory education lies in the recognition that differences in degree can amount to differences in kind, and therefore that to be compelled to learn is a child's right. Great respect should be afforded to the reasonable methods chosen by school authorities to accomplish that learning. Obedience and orderliness are essential to an atmosphere for learning. Courts must develop the humility necessary to recognize that control of the classroom is not their function. Length of hair, standards for clothes, requirements of conformity for the common good of the student body may be deemed an essential part of the learning process and, at least for the period of compulsory education, litigation based upon claims of personal rights or academic freedom should be discouraged. To conclude that a child who can learn cannot be so disciplined as to be compelled to learn is grossly unfair to the child. Human experience establishes that adults do or avoid doing many things because of socially imposed sanctions. Understanding a need for such sanctions and their nature is part of the learning process that must be taught in school for orderly behavior and for the inculcation of self-discipline.

Teaching "to the tune of the hickory stick" was a generally accepted method of instruction in the early days of compulsory education. We do not suggest a return to that long-abandoned practice, but substitute methods of discipline must be found. And our courts must, in large measure, return to the application of the *in loco parentis* doctrine when considering the relationship between students and school authorities.

A significant percentage of the people in jail and on welfare are school drop-outs who were not properly disciplined and who are grossly undereducated. Some children who depend on public support are fifth-generation welfare recipients. We have virtually established a caste of the illiterate and the ignorant—despite the democratic premises of this Nation. The grossly undereducated, public-dependent, 15-year-old child of grossly undereducated, welfare recipient parents cannot, at 16, be dismissed from consideration as a responsible adult. The choices for such adults in their pursuit of happiness are narrow indeed. Parental, societal, and educational failures helped them get where they are. Complacency and lethargy or anger and frustration keep them there.

To tell such hard-core illiterate adults that classes are open if they want to pursue an education and let it go at that reveals a smugness unworthy of any of us. Teachers in adult basic education report that one of the primary difficulties is the adult students' abhorrence of the classroom atmosphere. How do we balance adults' freedom to reject education with the limits the exercise of that freedom places on their ability to make choices?

The fundamental issue is: Does an individual have the constitutional right to remain ignorant and dependent even though education is designed, as best it can be designed, for the individual's best interest? We do not suggest an answer.

This brings us to the consideration of how education (voluntary or involuntary) of this hard-core group is to be pursued.

We found a splendid dedication to their tasks in adult education teachers. No less dedicated are the volunteers striving to eliminate illiteracy. In the main, our system of adult education does good work with motivated students. This keeps it busy and, in some areas, periodically overtaxed. There is nothing to indicate that this system is equipped with the knowledge or techniques needed to motivate the unmotivated hard-core group.

In dealing with this unmotivated hard-core group, elements other than formal training may be far more important to teaching literacy. We suggest this possibility because, at the turn of the century, teachers in the one-room school were frequently little better-educated than the most advanced of their students. Yet it was rare for a student to remain in school for as long as eight years and leave still illiterate. Investigation should be conducted on the feasibility of using literate welfare recipients or literate prison inmates to teach the illiterate among their ranks. Ease and familiarity may be more important to the learning process than the formal education of the teacher.

This nation—not just its educators—must squarely face the following:

- It is absurd for our nation to watch an illiterate person drop out of school when we know the consequences to that student and to society.
- It is equally absurd to retain an illiterate person in school if that person is not going to learn and will create havoc for everyone else there.
- It is absurd for our nation to watch an illiterate inmate leave prison when we know his ineptness at living in society will result in new crime.
- It is equally absurd for our nation to watch an illiterate inmate reject all offers of education when we know that person is educable and that education might help him or her become a useful citizen (and, more importantly, a more satisfied person).
- It is absurd for our nation to watch an illiterate parent raise welfare-recipient children to continue on welfare when we know that that parent is educable and could, through education, become an inspiration to his or her children.

There will be no quick and easy answers, but the issues must be tackled, for great rewards await both the pursuers and the pursued.

Daniel E. Brennan, Sr., *Member*

WHAT PRICE DESEGREGATION?

Obviously many gains for blacks have been realized as a result of the civil rights movement but the question is could even greater gains have been realized if some things had been done differently? Or, could blacks have accomplished what we did in the last thirty-one (31) years without the great upheaval we have experienced? Should education have been the pawn when there were so many other factors upsetting racial balance? Why was it necessary for the schools to be the battleground, and the little black children the soldiers in the vanguard of the second most violent revolution in America? In such a situation, who was the victor and where was the valor?

The price the American people paid to achieve racial balance in the schools was too great. Instead of providing an orderly process for equality in education with all deliberate speed, we bused children to hostile territories and placed them in classes without appropriate testing; devised a curriculum that was more skeletal than substantive; required clerical tasks of teachers instead of teaching techniques; and changed school administrators from academic facilitators to facility managers. School boards were forced to turn their attention to students' rights and racial composition instead of curriculum development. Schools ceased to be the obligation of the states and came under the control of federal mandates. Enormous amounts of money were expended to develop regulations and programs to monitor and evaluate the progress of integration in the schools rather than to improve academic achievement. Was federally imposed, court-ordered desegregation a proper interpretation of the Constitution or an infringement of the state's responsibility, and what did it accomplish?

By now, we all know the negative educational results of integration. Teachers hastily hired and arbitrarily assigned to schools developed negative attitudes about the students' ability to learn and students fulfilled teachers' low expectations. The drop-out rate for blacks reached 50% in some areas. In short, the quality of education in the disadvantaged black neighborhoods was not only not improved, but fell far below national averages. Even the desired social outcomes—the mixing of the races—was not accomplished as "white flight" resulted in predominantly black metropolitan areas.

The situation in the North was exacerbated by the integration of all interstate travel following Dr. Martin L. King's successful boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. Consequently, southern blacks migrated north where there were better educational opportunities. However, in their impoverished and illiterate state, these blacks were able to benefit little, but added to the welfare and crime rolls in overcrowded ghettoes and became some of the blacks who now comprise a large percentage of the illiterates in this country.

It can be argued that many blacks educated under the segregated system—in the North more than three decades ago—were better educated than those in the integrated system of today. They had been rapidly closing the educational gap with less than 1 year's difference between themselves and their white counterparts. Education had not been their problem, but income was. Black college graduates could expect to earn in a lifetime only as much as whites with 3 years of high school education. While the educational gap was closing, the income gap was not. Black income was 56% that of the average white income in 1965. It had been 57% in 1952. Some black protest groups such as CORE and SNCC were aware of the broader picture. They were looking at the effects of desegregation, not only on schools, but on housing, jobs, and neighborhoods. They were listening to the segregated South say, "We can't get a good education," but they were also listening to the ghettorized North say, "I got an education but I still cannot find a decent job that pays decent money." Dr. Martin L. King understood that once black America obtained self-respect, its high level of illiteracy would be reduced, and economic opportunities would increase. Not all blacks favored desegregation and court-ordered busing. Realizing that the future of black America rested in the black community and that education was a key element, the Organization of Afro-American Unity believed that the Constitution clearly affirmed the rights of every American citizen but that the states were totally responsible for education. They felt that black children were being criminally shortchanged by the public schools and campaigned against the integration program of the New York City Board of Education because they felt it was unworkable and too expensive. They preferred schools for blacks that were controlled by the black community.

As one who attended an all-black high school, I know what many blacks sacrificed for an integrated school system. Bates High School, in Annapolis, Maryland, produced many outstanding black scholars, athletes and professionals. Our achievement scores were high, our graduates were accepted into colleges, and our drop-out rate was practically nonexistent. We competed enthusiastically in a variety of scholastic and athletic contests. We had dedicated teachers who inspired us to excel scholastically and an administration who cared about its students as a part of the community it served. Each day we were met by our principal, had daily prayer, gave the Pledge of Allegiance, and followed an orderly schedule of academic, commercial, or vocational classes. Although there were over 30 students in a class, we never felt overcrowded or slighted by our teachers. Our studies were structured and homework was assigned. Wall charts listed our grades and our standing in class. If there was the slightest problem, our parents had to come to school, but usually communication between the home and the school was positive as there were hardly ever discipline or behavior problems. When there was a problem, the principal either paddled the student or restricted extra-curricular activities. We held our teachers in the greatest esteem, had pride in our school, enjoyed competition, and appreciated rewards for doing well. When desegregation forced Bates to graduate its last class, 27 years of producing some of Maryland's most outstanding black citizens came to a halt. When those excellent black teachers were transferred, many times they were forced to teach out of their area, retire early, were burdened with federal clerical duties totally unrelated to teaching, or had to suffer administrators who were unqualified to fulfill their tasks. The cost of desegregation exceeded the dollars to bus students to integrate American schools. Achieving racial balance cost us too dearly in terms of discipline, classroom decorum, scholastic achievement, and respected institutional standing in the community.

What happened at Bates High School is just one example of the price black America paid to achieve racial balance. While the price was too high for us, it was even greater for the country as a whole. For when federal intervention in the educational process supersedes the rights of states and citizens, educational chaos results with a corresponding rise in adult illiteracy. I do not wish to demean the efforts of those attempting to achieve racial balance, but until schools are unshackled from federal regulations and states evaluate and define more clearly the role they should assume in offering educational opportunity for all, while insisting on appropriate achievement, our country will continue to suffer. The cost to achieve racial balance continues to be too dear. Black Americans do not want to see such a high price tag for their country. They care too much. Illiteracy in the black community stifles social, economic and political parity—a loss for the American society as a whole. Had more attention been given to the economic plight of black America, the desired goals of school desegregation could have been achieved through better housing, more jobs, and stronger communities. The dismantling of a vital social structure instrumental in the growth and well-being of our country could have been avoided. The price tag need not have been so steep.

Mary S. Jackson, *Member*

REFERENCES

1. *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.* Report to the Nation and to the Secretary of Education by the National Commission on Excellence, April 1983.
2. Adelson, Joseph. *Twenty-Five Years of American Education: An Interpretation.* Department of Psychology, University of Michigan. Paper commissioned for the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1982.
3. Adler, Mortimer J. *The Paideia Proposal, an Educational Manifesto.* New York: Macmillan, 1982.
4. American Institute for Character Education. *Character Education Curriculum.* Pasadena, California: Thomas Jefferson Research Center, 1980.
5. Anderson, Richard. *Hearings on Language and Literacy before the National Commission on Excellence in Education,* Staff Summary. Houston: April 16, 1982.
6. *APL Revisited: Its Uses and Adaptation in States.* Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, September 1980.
7. Appel, Timothy. "Educators Must Tolerate, Explain Electronic Tools." *Columbus Dispatch,* May 8, 1983, p. C1.
8. *Aptitude Profile of American Youth: 1980 Nationwide Administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery* (ASVAS), Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense.
9. Armbruster, Frank E. *Our Children's Crippled Future.* New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Company, 1977.
10. ______."The Future of the Back-to-Basis Trend." In Jane Newitt (Ed.), *Future Trends in Education Policy.* Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Co., 1979. (Work developed under a Hudson Institute contract with National Institute of Education.)
11. Artley, Sterl A. Foreword. In William S. Gray, *On Their Own in Reading.* Cited in Mitford Mathew, *Teaching to Read;* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.
12. Astin, Alexander W. *Excellence and Equity in American Education.* Paper for the Commission on Excellence in Education, 1982.
13. Augenblick, John and C. Kent McGuire. *Tuition Tax Credits: Their Impact on the States.* Report No. F82-4, Education Commission of the States, October 1982.
14. Aukerman, Robert G. *Reading in the Secondary School Classroom.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972.
15. *Background Information Bulletin.* The International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 1980.
16. Baer, Richard A., Jr. "Values Clarification as Indoctrination." *The Educational Forum,* January 1977, pp. 155–165.
17. Ball, Aimee Lee. "The Secret of Learning Styles." *Redbook,* November 1982, pp. 74–76.
18. Beck, Joan. "Belated Attention to Research on How We Learn." *Columbus Dispatch.*
19. ______. "Can Equality Yield Excellence?" *The Columbus Dispatch,* May 27, 1983.
20. ______. "Scientists Tag 'Can't Read' Gene." *The Chicago Tribune,* March 23, 1983.
21. Beck, Isabell and Ellen S. McCaslin. *An Anaylsis of Dimensions that Effect the Development of Code-Breaking Ability in Eight Beginning Reading Programs.* University of Pittsburgh, Learning Research and Development Center, 1978.
22. Bestor, Arthur. *Educational Wastelands.* The University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1953.
23. ______. *The Restoration of Learning.* New York: Alfred Knopf, 1955.
24. Bhola, H. S. "The Elusive Goal of World Literacy." *Development Communication Report,* April 1980.
25. Blackington, Frank H., III, Robert Houston, and Ann Omsted. "Stances Teachers Take: A Basis for Selective Admission." *Phi Delta Kappan,* January 1974.
26. Blackington, Frank H., III, and Ann Omsted. "A Sociophilosophic Perspective on the Potential of Schooling." In W. Robert Houston (Ed.), *Exploring Competency Based Education.* Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Co., 1974.
27. Blackington, Frank H., III, and Robert Patterson. *School, Society and the Professional Educator.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.
28. Blackington, Frank H., III. "The Instrumental Value of Research on Logical Thinking—Teaching the Young to Think." *Theory into Practice, 12,* XII, No. 5, December 1973, pp. 266–271.
29. ______. "The Continuing Dilemma in American Education," Chapter 5, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1966. (Mimeographed)
30. Bloom, Benjamin S. *All Our Children Learning.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981.
31. Blumenfeld, Samuel. *How to Start Your Own Private School and Why You Need One.* New York: Arlington House, 1972.
32. Bond, Guy L. and Miles A. Tinker. *Reading Difficulties: Their Diagnosis and Correction.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967.
33. Boyer, Ernest L. *High School.* New York: Harper and Row, 1983.

34. Brimelow, Peter. "What To Do About America's Schools?" *Fortune*, September 19, 1983.
35. Brown, Rexford. "Literacy Is Not So Basic." *Compact*, Fall 1981, pp. 16–19.
36. Brunner, Michael. "Adult Illiteracy and School Instruction." Paper prepared for the National Advisory Council on Adult Education, 1983.
37. Cahn, Stephen. "Tangled Ivy." *New Republic*, April 18, 1981.
38. Carnevale, Anthony. *An Extension of Remarks before the Conference on the Future of Ohio's Economy*. April 29, 1983, Columbus, Ohio.
39. Caruso, David R. and Douglas K. Detterman. "Intelligence Research and Social Policy." *Phi Delta Kappan, 63*, November 1981, pp. 183–184.
40. Cervero, Ronald. *A Comparison of Approaches to Measuring Outcomes in Adult Basic Education*. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, March 1979.
41. ______. Assessment in Adult Basic Education: "A Comparison of the APL and GED Tests." *Adult Education, 31*, No. 2, 1981.
42. ______. "Does the Texas Adult Performance Level Test Measure Functional Competence?" *Adult Education, 30*, No. 3, 1980.
43. Chall, Jeanne S. *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. (Updated version). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983.
44. ______. "Literacy: Trends and Explanations." *Educational Researcher, 12*, No. 9, November 1983.
45. ______. "New Views On Developing Basic Skills with Adults." *National Conference on Adult Literary*, January 19–20, 1984, Washington, D.C.
46. ______. *Stages of Reading Development*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983.
47. Clarkson, Kenneth and Roger Meiners. *Distortions in Official Unemployment Statistics*. Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas, 1979.
48. *Condition of Education, The*. 1982 Edition. National Center for Educational Statistics. Washington, D.C.
49. *Congressional Record, The*. (Senate). Wednesday, May 2, *125*, No 53.
50. Copperman, Paul. *The Literacy Hoax*. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1978.
51. Costa, Arthur L. "Teaching for Intelligent Behavior." *Educational Leadership*, October 1981, pp. 29–32.
52. Cremin, Lawrence. *The Transformation of the Schools*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.
53. Cunningham, Luvern and Joseph Hentges. *The American School Superintendency*. 1982, American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Virginia.
54. Darling, Sharon. *Final Report*. Jefferson County Adult Reading Project, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Jefferson County Board of Education. Louisville, Kentucky: June 1981.
55. Davies, Don. *Communities and Their Schools*. New York: McGraw-Hill. 1981.
56. Dee, Norman Lloyd. "Prediction of School Failure from Third-Grade Data." *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 38*, 1978, pp. 1193–1194.
57. *Developing High School Reading Programs*. Edited by Mildred A. Dawson. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1967.
58. *Digest of Educational Statistics*, 1982 Edition, National Center for Educational Statistics. Washington, D.C.
59. "Discipline Codes Must Foster Balance of Order, Autonomy." *Education Week*, January 18, 1984.
60. Divoky, Diane. "The Pioneers of the Home-Schooling Movement." *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1983, pp. 395–398.
61. Doyle, Denis. "The New Interest in Specialized High Schools." *The Wall Street Journal*, September 2, 1982.
62. Drucker, Peter. *Management*. New York: Harper and Row, 1973–74.
63. ______. "Quality Education: The New Growth Area." *The Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 1983.
64. Duckworth, Kenneth. *Intelligence, Motivation, and Academic Work: An Operations Perspective*. Paper commissioned by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, Washington, D.C.: March 25, 1983.
65. Duffy, Thomas. *Literacy Instruction in the Military*. Communication Design Center, Carnegie Mellon University, November 16, 1983.
66. Durkin, Dolores. "Is There a Match between What Elementary Teachers Do and What Basal Reader Manuals Recommend?" *The Reading Teacher*, April 1984.
67. "Early Adolescence: Current R&D Activity at NIE." *Sixth Report of the National Council on Educational Research*. National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., 1980.
68. *Early Prevention of School Failure, The*. Peotone, Illinois: National Diffusion Network, U.S. Department of Education, 1981.
69. Eastland, Terry. "Teaching Morality in the Public Schools." *Wall Street Journal*, February 22, 1982.
70. Ebel, Robert. "The Failure of Schools Without Failure." *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1980.
71. ______. "Three Radical Proposals for Strengthening Education." *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1982.
72. "Education? by Computer, Naturally." *U.S. News and World Report*, May 9, 1983.
73. *Education in the Future*. A background paper prepared for Ohio's Commission on Educational Excellence, Ohio Department of Education, 1982.
74. *Education USA. 25*, No. 20. Washington, D.C.: National School Public Relations Association, January 10, 1983.
75. *Educational Standards in Japan*. Quinquennial Report on Education, English version, March 1976, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.
76. Edwards, Kenneth. *The Perspective of Organized Labor on Improving America's Productivity*. The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Ohio State University, February 1983.
77. Eldridge, Marie D. *International Education Statistics at NCES: A Comparative Perspective and a Response to Advanced Technology*. Paper presented at the National Center for Education

Statistics to the National Association for State Boards of Education and the National School Boards Association Joint Committee, November 29, 1982.

78. Eliot, T. S. *To Criticize the Critic.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965.

79. Elligett, Jane and Thomas Tocco. "Reading Achievement in 1979 vs. Achievement in the Fifties." *Phi Delta Kappan,* June 1980.

80. English, Fenwick, "Your Board's Responsibility for Curriculum." Speech, National School Boards Association, San Francisco, April 10, 1976.

81. Erickson, Donald. "Private Schools." *Encyclopedia of Educational Research,* New York: Free Press, 3.

82. Euchner, Charlie. "New York Considers Enrolling Students at Age Four." *Education Week,* February 2, 1983, p. 4.

83. *Evaluation of the New York State Experimental Pre-Kindergarten Program, Final Report.* Albany: State Education Department, February 22, 1982.

84. Evans, Bertrand and James Lynch. *High School English Textbooks.* Berkeley, California: University of California, 1963.

85. Fadiman, Clifton. "Twenty Years After: The Case for Basic Education." Speech, Council for Basic Education Conference, St. Louis, October 29, 1976.

86. Fantini, Mario D. "A Caring Curriculum for Gifted Children." *The Education Digest,* November 1981, pp. 21–23.

87. *Farmington's Counseling Program for the Gifted and Talented: An Abstract.* Abstract prepared for the Farmington Public Schools in Farmington, Connecticut.

88. Fenstermacher, Gary D. "To Be or Not To Be Gifted: What Is the Question?" *The Elementary School Journal, 82,* January 1982, No. 3, pp. 299–303.

89. Fetters, William B., Jeffrey A. Owings, Larry E. Suter, and Ricky T. Takai. *Schooling Experiences in Japan and the U.S.: A Cross-National Comparison of High School Students.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Montreal, Canada, by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, April 13, 1983.

90. Feuerstein, Reuven. *Instrumental Enrichment, An Intervention Program for Cognitive Modifiability.* Baltimore: University Park Press, 1979.

91. *Fifth Report of the National Council on Educational Research.* National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., 1978–1979, pp. 30–40.

92. Finn, Chester E. "American Education Revives." *Wall Street Journal,* July 7, 1982.

93. ______. "Teacher Politics." *Commentary, 75,* February 1983, No. 2, pp. 29–41.

94. ______. "What the NIE Cannot Be." *Phi Delta Kappan,* February 1983.

95. ______. "Who Ruined the Schools?" *Wall Street Journal,* Editorial Review and Outlook.

96. Flesch, Rudolf. "Why Johnny Still Can't Read." *Family Circle Magazine,* November 1, 1979.

97. Flieger, Howard. "Can Teachers Teach?" *U.S. News and World Report,* October 28, 1974.

98. *Fourth Annual Report of the National Council on Educational Research,* National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., 1978

99. Fox, G. Thomas, Jr. *Challenging How Teachers Are Educated.* ERIC Clearinghouse, February 1983.

100. Freeman, Roger. *The Wayward Welfare State.* Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, California, 1981.

101. Froese, Victor. "Classics in Reading: A Survey." *The Reading Teacher,* December 1982.

102. Frye, Charles. "Who Runs the Schools?" *Newsweek,* September 3, 1979.

103. Frye, Northrop. *The Educated Imagination.* Bloomington, Indiana, University Press, 1971.

104. Gallagher, James J. "A Plan for Catalytic Support for Gifted Education in the 1980's." *The Elementary School Journal, 82,* January 1982, No. 3.

105. Gillette, Arthur and John Ryan. "Eleven Issues in Literacy for the 1990's." *Assignment Children 63/64,* UNICEF, Geneva, Switzerland, 1983.

106. Glasser, William. *Schools Without Failure.* New York, Harper and Row, 1977.

107. Glenn, H. Stephen. *Strengthening the Family.* Washington-San Francisco, Potomac Press, 1981.

108. Gobel, Frank. *The Case for Character Education,* Ottawa, Illinois: 1983.

109. ______ and B. David Brooks. *Excellence in Leadership.* AMA, 1972.

110. Goodlad, John. *A Place Called School.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984

111. Goodman, Ellen. "Longer School Day May Not Help Kids." *Columbus Citizen Journal,* September 17, 1983.

112. Gordon, Edward E. "Home Tutoring Programs Gain Respectability." *Phi Delta Kappan,* February 1983, p. 398.

113. Grant, Gerald with John Briggs. "Today's Children Are Different." *Educational Leadership,* March 1983.

114. Griffith, William and Ronald Cervero. "The Adult Performance Level Program: A Serious and Deliberate Examination." *Adult Education, 27,* No. 4, 1977.

115. Groff, Patrick. "Can the Myths of Reading Instruction be Dispelled?" From Patrick Groff paper "Myths of Reading Instruction," 1983

116. Gurren, Louise and Ann Hughes. "Intensive Phonics vs. Gradual Phonics in Beginning Reading: A Review." *Journal of Education Research, 58,* April 1965.

117. Hall-Quest, A.L. and I.L. Kandel. "Theories of Education." *Collier's Encyclopedia,* Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, 1962, U.S.A.

118. Hannontree, Tom. "Profile of a Dropout." *Florida Vocational Journal,* April 1978, pp. 26–28.

119. Harrington, Robert G. "Caution: Standardized Testing May Be Hazardous to the Educational Programs of Intellectually Gifted Children." *Education, 103,* No. 2, pp. 112–117.

120. Harris, Marlys. "Why Private Schools Can." *Money,* September 1981.

121. Hechinger, Fred. "About Education." *New York Times*, November 16, 1982, p. C8.
122. ______. "The Very Young Could Benefit from Going to School." *Akron Beacon Journal*, Friday 18 November 1983.
123. Heller, Sherri Z. "Do Values Clarification Programs Help or Hinder Social and Emotional Growth?" *Teacher*, February 1979, pp. 19–22.
124. Hershey, Myrliss. "An Approach to Mainstreaming for Gifted Children." *The Education Digest*, March 1982.
125. Hicks, William Vernon and Frank H. Blackington, III. *Introduction to Education*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1965.
126. *Highlights of Early Childhood Program Accomplishments, Preliminary Reports: 1981–1982*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia City Schools, December 1982.
127. Hill, Kenton. "The Relationship Between a Preservice Interview and Student Teaching Performance." University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1980
128. Hinkley, Ed. "An Instructional Program for Dropouts." *NAASP Bulletin*, February 1979, pp. 59–64.
129. Hirsch, E.D., Jr. "Cultural Literacy." Speech, National Conference on Adult Literacy, January 20, 1984, Washington, D.C.
130. Holsinger, Donald B. *Time, Content and Expectations as Predictors of School Achievement in the USA and Other Developed Countries: A Review of IEA Evidence*. Paper presented to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, Washington, D.C.: September 28, 1982.
131. Hood, Marshall. "Where Have All the Values Gone?" *Columbus Dispatch*, July 23, 1982, C1.
132. Houston, Robert W. and Frank H. Blackington, III, Horton C. Southworth. *Professional Growth Through Student Teaching*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1965.
133. Hunter, Carmen St. John and David Harman. *Adult Illiteracy in the United States*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.
134. Hunter, Madeline. "Right-Brained Kids in Left-Brained Schools." *Today's Education*, November–December 1976, pp. 45–48.
135. Husen, Torsten. *Trends in American Education—As Seen Through European Eyes*. Institute of International Education, University of Stockholm, Stockholm, Sweden.
136. Hutchins, Robert M. "On Political Maturity." *Change*, November 1974.
137. Hymowitz, Carol. "Remedial Bosses: Employers Take Over Where Schools Failed To Teach the Basics." *The Wall Street Journal*, January 22, 1981.
138. "Implementing Effective LRE Programs." ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science, Boulder, Colorado. Fact Sheet No. 8, December 1982.
139. Jacques, Joseph W. "Adult Illiteracy and Undereducation in Massachusetts: Can We Afford It?" Worcester, Massachusetts: Massachusetts State College, Right to Read Academy, 1979.
140. Jensen, Donald. "A Legal Dilemma." National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, June 1982.
141. "Job Training Said Not As Important As Work Habits." *Education Week*, January 18, 1984.
142. Johnson, Mary. *Programmed Illiteracy in Our Schools*, Winnipeg, Canada: Clarity Books, 1971.
143. Kane, Nancy and Martin Kane. "Comparison of Right and Left Hemisphere Function." *The Gifted Child Quarterly*, Spring 1979, pp. 157–167.
144. Karnes, Frances A. and M. Ray Karnes. "Parents and Schools: Educating Gifted and Talented Children." *The Elementary School Journal, 82,* January 1982, No. 3, pp. 236–248.
145. Karnes, Merle B., Allan M. Schwedel, and Susan A. Linnemeyer. "The Young Gifted/Talented Child: Programs at the University of Illinois." *The Elementary School Journal, 82,* January 1982, No. 3, pp. 195–213.
146. Kirk, Russell. *Reviving America's Schools: America's Future*. Index No. 773, New Rochelle, New York.
147. ______. "Teachers Are Part of the Problem." *The University Bookman*, Autumn, 1982.
148. Koerner, James D. "Advice for Parents and Other Amateurs." Speech, Council for Basic Education, St. Louis, Missouri, October 29, 1976.
149. ______. *The Miseducation of American Teachers*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963.
150. Komoski, Kenneth. Publishers' Responsibilities in Meeting the Continuing Challenge of Literacy. Literacy Meeting the Challenge Series. Paper presented at the National Right to Read Conference, Washington, D.C.: May 1978.
151. Langway, Lynn, et al. "Bringing Up Superbaby." *Newsweek*, March 28, 1983.
152. Lasley, Thomas: "Research Perspectives on Classroom Management." *Journal of Teacher Education*, March–*April 1981, 32,* No. 2.
153. ______ and William Wayson. "Characteristics of Schools with Good Discipline." *Educational Leadership*. December 1982.
154. Lavin, Dan. "Billy Reagan." *The Executive Educator*, January 1983.
155. Lerner, Barbara. "American Education: How Are We Doing?" *The Public Interest*, Fall Education Report, 1982, pp. 59–82.
156. Levin, Henry. "Uniformity and Diversity." National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, June 1982.
157. Levine, Kenneth. "Functional Literacy, Fond Illusions and False Economies." *Harvard Educational Review, 52,* No. 3, August 1982.
158. Lieberman, Myron. "Teacher Bargaining: An Autopsy." *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1981.
159. Lippman, Walter. "Education vs. Western Civilization." Speech, Harvard University, December 29, 1940. Reprinted by Thomas Jefferson Research Center, December 1978.
160. Lockwood, Alan L. "The Effects of Values Clarification and Moral Development Curricula on School-Age Subjects: A Critical Review of Recent Research." *Review of Educational Research, 48,* Summer 1978, No. 3.
161. ______. "What's Wrong with Values Clarification?" *Social Education*, May 1977, pp. 399–401.
162. "Longer, Harder School Days." *Newsweek*, September 19, 1983.

163. Mackey, James and Deborah Appelman. "The Growth of Adolescent Apathy." *Educational Leadership*, March 1983.

164. Maehr, Martin L. *Motivational Factors in School Achievement*. Paper commissioned by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Washington, D.C.: October 26, 1982.

165. Malizio, Andrew and Douglas Whitney. *Examinee and High School Senior Performance on the GED Tests: A Detailed Analysis*. American Council on Education, June 1982, GED Testing Service Research Studies, No. 3.

166. Mamman, Henry, Ursula Hogan, and Charles E. Greene. *Reading Instruction in the Secondary Schools*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961.

167. "Marijuana and Health." Ninth Annual Report to Congress from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, 1982.

168. Marshall, Bonnie Crawford. "Career Decision-Making Patterns of Gifted Adolescents." *The Education Digest*, December 1981, pp. 33–35.

169. Marshall, Kim. "The Reading Problem: Some Sensible Solutions." *Learning*, April/May 1983.

170. Mead, Margaret. "Why Our Schools Are Failing to Teach." *Redbook*, August 1976.

171. Methvin, Eugene. "The NEA: A Washington Lobby Run Rampant." *Reader's Digest*, November 1978, pp. 89–94.

172. Mills, Beth Solow. "Imagination: The Connection Between Writing and Play." *Educational Leadership*, March 1981.

173. Mohs, Mayo. "I.Q. New Research Shows that Japanese Outperform All Others in Intelligence Tests: Are They Really Smarter?" *Discovery*, September 1982, pp. 19–24.

174. Moore, Allen B. *Literacy: Meeting the Challenge*. Paper presented at National Right to Read Conference, Washington, D.C.: May 1978.

175. Mosse, Hilde. "Reading Disorders in the United States." *The Reading Teacher*, November 1962.

176. Mullins, Stephen P. and Anita A. Summers. "Is More Better? The Effectiveness of Spending on Compensatory Education." *Phi Delta Kappan*, January 1983, pp. 339–347.

177. Naisbett, John. *Megatrends*. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1982.

178. National Advisory Council on Supplementary Centers and Services. *Dropout Prevention*. Washington, D.C.: 1975.

179. National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

180. "Nation's First Computerized Merit Pay Plan—It's in Dallas, Of Course." *Education Times*, September 12, 1983.

181. Neufeld, Barbara and Eleanor Farrar, Matthew B. Miles. *A Review of Effective Schools Research: The Message for Secondary Schools*. Paper prepared for the National Commission on Excellence in Education, Washington, D.C.: January 1983.

182. *New Dimensions of the Federal-State Partnership in Education*. Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc. Edited by Joel Sherman, Mark Kutner, and Kimberly Small. Washington, D.C.: Tilden Press, 1982.

183. Nikifaruk, Andrew. "Why Kids Can't Read." *Quest*, September 1982.

184. Nystrom, Christine. "What Television Teaches About Sex." *Educational Leadership*, March 1983.

185. O'Connor, Georganne. "New Liberals Charge Educators Do Not Lead Reforms, See Old Liberals Held in Bondage by Education Establishment." *Education Times*, October 31, 1983.

186. Office of Occupational Planning, Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education. *Early School Leavers: Position Paper*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, 1978.

187. Pace, C. Robert. *Achievement and the Quality of Student Effort*. Report prepared for the National Commission on Excellence in Education, by the Higher Education Research Institute Graduate School of Eucation, University of California. Los Angeles, California: May 1982.

188. Packard, Vance. "Are We Becoming A Nation of Illiterates?" *Reader's Digest*, April 1974.

189. Patterson, Oliver and Lewis Pulling. "Critical Issues in Adult Illiteracy." *Outlook for the 80's*, U.S. Department of Education, Basic Skills Improvement Program, September 1981.

190. Petreshine, Susan. "Three Children: Three Modes of Learning." *Instructor*, March 1982, pp. 50–53.

191. *Policy Perspectives*. Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, Stanford University. Stanford, California: Winter 1982.

192. Pollack, Cecelia and Victor Martuza. "Teaching Reading in the Cuban Primary Schools." *The Journal of Reading, 25*, No. 3, December 1981.

193. Porter, Joanell. *A Comparison of Selected Characteristics of Private and Public Schools*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, June 1982.

194. *Positive Attitude Toward Learning*. Belhalto Community Unit No. 8 Schools, National Diffusion Network, U.S. Department of Education, 1975.

195. Postman, Neil. "The Disappearing Child." *Education Leadership*, March 1983.

196. Prokop, Harvey L. *Intelligence, Motivation, and the Quantity and Quality of Academic Work and Their Impacts on the Learning of Students: A Practitioner's Reaction*. Paper prepared for the Curriculum and Programs Division of the San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, California: July 1982.

197. "Public Schooling on the Skids: An Educational Voucher System Could Solve the Problem." *Pathfinder, 3*, No. 3, January/February 1981.

198. *Public Testimony on Public Schools*. National Committee for Citizens in Education. Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Co., 1975.

199. Ranbom, Sheppard. "Pre-school Study Finds Long-Term Games." *Education Week*, September 7, 1983.

200. Raspberry, William. "So What If the Tests Are Biased?" Inserted into the Congressional Record by Hon. William F. Goodling, April 28, 1983.

201. Ravitch, Diane. "A Bifurcated Vision of Urban Education." *The New Republic*, April 18, 1981.

202. ______. *The Revisionists Revised*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978.

203. ______. "The Schools We Deserve." *The New Republic*, April 18, 1981.

204. ______. *The Troubled Crusade*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983.

205. Reagan, Ronald. "English of Students is a National Problem." *The Columbus Dispatch*, March 16, 1975. *Copley News Service*.

206. "Reforming the Schools." *Education Daily*, December 12, 1983.

207. Renzulli, Joseph, Linda Smith, and Sally Reis. "Curriculum Comparting: An Essential Strategy for Working with Gifted Students." *The Elementary School Journal*, January 1982.

208. *Report of Governor's Study Committee on High School Dropouts and Unskilled Graduates*. Columbus, Ohio: State Department of Education, 1981.

209. *Report of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers*. Third Session, Geneva, 8–19 March 1976. International Labour Office, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

210. *Report of the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth*. Washington, D.C.: Education Commission of the States, June 1983.

211. *Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Policy*. New York: 1983.

212. "Reporter Finds Some Surprises in Successful Reading Programs." *Education USA*, August 22, 1983.

213. Resnick, L.B. "Theories and Prescriptions for Early Reading Instruction." In L.B. Resnick and P.A. Weaver (Eds.) *Theory and Practice of Early Reading*, 2. Hilldales, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1979.

214. ______. and Daniel P. Resnick. *Standards, Curriculum, and Performance: A Historical and Comparative Perspective*. Report to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, Washington, D.C.: September 1982.

215. Rickover, Hyman. "Rescue Floundering Education." *New York Times*, January 30, 1983.

216. Rigg, Pat and Francis E. Kazemek. *Adult Illiteracy: Problem and Solutions*. Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Media, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

217. "Whatever Happened To . . .?" Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

218. Robinson, Virginia. "Vocational Education Study Proposes Flexible Standards for Teachers, Vouchers for Students." *Education Times*, October 3, 1983.

219. Rosenblatt, Louise M. "The Acid Test for Literature Teaching." *The English Journal*, 1958.

220. Royster, Vermont. "The New Illiteracy." *Change*, April 1975.

221. Rutter, Michael, et al. *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Trial Effects on Children*. London: Open Books, 1979.

222. Saiter, Susan. "Mastery Learning on a Grand Scale." *New York Times*, January 9, 1983.

223. Samuels, S.J. *A Discussion of the Pittsburgh Reading Conference Papers*. Paper delivered at the Conference on Theory and Practice of Beginning Reading Instruction. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Learning Research and Development Center, April 1976.

224. Savage, David. "The Federal Schoolhouse." *The New Republic*, April 18, 1981.

225. "The Schools Flunk." Review and Outlook (editorial), *The Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 1983.

226. "School News." *Education Daily*, September 1, 1983.

227. Segal, Judith and Edwin Delattre. "Blackboard Jumble." *The New Republic*, April 18, 1981.

228. Sewell, Gilbert. *Necessary Lessons*. New York: The Free Press, Macmillan, Inc., 1983.

229. ______. "Teachers' Unions and the Issue of Academic Standards." *Wall Street Journal*, January 6, 1983.

230. ______. "Vocational Education That Works." *Fortune*, September 20, 1983.

231. Shannon, Patrick. "The Use of Commercial Reading Materials in Elementary Schools." *Reading Research Quarterly*, Fall 1983, International Reading Association.

232. Sheils, Merrill. "Why Johnny Can't Write." *Newsweek*, December 8, 1975.

233. Sisk, Dorothy A. "Caring and Sharing—Moral Development of Gifted Students." *The Elementary School Journal*, *82*, January 1982, No. 3.

234. Smith, Mortimer. *And Madly Teach*. Chicago, Illinois: Henry Regnery Company, 1949.

235. Snow, Richard E. *Intelligence, Motivation, and Academic Work*. Paper presented at "The Students' Role in Learning" symposium by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, U.S. Department of Education, San Diego, California: July 30, 1982.

236. Sobel, Dava. "Work Habits in Childhood Found to Predict Adult Well-Being." *New York Times*, November 10, 1981, p.17, National Edition.

237. Stabile, Robert. "Achieving Quality Education in Your Schools." *OSBA Journal*, June 1983.

238. Sternberg, Robert J. and Richard K. Wagner. *Understanding Intelligence: What's in It for Educators?* Paper submitted to the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Washington, D.C.: July 1982.

239. Sticht, Thomas. *The Basic Skills Movement: Its Impact on Literacy*. Literacy: Meeting the Challenge Series. Paper presented at the National Right to Read Conference, Washington, D.C., May 1978.

240. Stipek, Deborah. *Motivating Students To Learn: A Lifelong Perspective*. Paper prepared for the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Washington, D.C.: July 1982.

241. Stone, Marvin. "Ah, Good Old McGuffey." *U.S. News and World Report*, May 2, 1983.

242. ______. "What Schools Aren't Teaching." *U.S. News and World Report*, May 31, 1982.

243. Strobert, Barbara and Frank R. Alvarez. "The Convocation Model Project: A Creative Approach to the Study of Science for Gifted Disadvantaged Students." *The Elementary School Journal*, *82*, January 1982, No. 3.

244. "Student Disruption: Classroom Chaos Linked to Teacher Practices." *R&DCTE Review*, NIE.

245. Subcommittee for Reducing Dropouts, Improving Pupil Attendance—Reducing Dropouts State

Consultants' meeting. *Literature Review*, Columbus, Ohio: State Department of Education, 1982.

246. Sullivan, Daniel. "Comparing Efficiency between Public and Nonpublic Schools." *Policy Perspectives*, Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, Stanford University, California, February 1983.
247. Szekely, George E. "Art Partnership Network: A Supportive Program for Artistically Gifted Children." *The Elementary School Journal, 82*, September 1982, No. 1.
248. Taylor, John and Richard Usher. "Discipline." *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, New York: The Free Press, 1.
249. Thernstrom, Abigal M. "E Pluribus Plura—Congress and Bilingual Education." *Public Interest, 60*, Summer 1980.
250. Thomas, M. Donald. "Strategies to Improve Schools." *Citizen Action in Education, I.R.E.*, June 1982.
251. Thompson, Roger. "Illiteracy in America." *Editorial Research Report, 1*, No. 24, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., June 24, 1983.
252. Toch, Thomas. "Merit Pay Issue Dominates School-Reform Debate." *Education Week*, June 15, 1983.
253. "Today's High School Diploma Is Fraudulent." Interview with John R. Silber, President, Boston University, *U.S. News and World Report*, September 7, 1981.
254. *Tomorrow's Illiterates*. Edited by Charles Wolcutt. Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown and Co., 1961.
255. Tractenburg, Donald J. "Gifted Students, Regular Classrooms: Sixty Ingredients for a Better Blend." *School Journal, 82*, January 1982, No. 3.
256. Tractenburg, Paul. *Who is Accountable for Pupil Literacy?* Literacy: Meeting the Challenge Series. Paper presented at the National Right to Read Conference, Washington, D.C., May 1978.
257. Tuhy, Carrie. "Choosing Grade-A Value in Education." *Money*, September 1981.
258. Tyack, David and Elizabeth Hansad. *Managers of Virtue—Public School Leadership in America, 1820–1980*. New York: Basic Books, 1982.
259. Tyler, Ralph. "Dynamic Response in a Time of Decline." *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 1982.
260. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, 1, Part 1, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-19, No. 4.
261. ______. *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, Numbers 99 and 217.
262. ______. *Provisional Estimates of Social, Economic and Housing Characteristics*, PHC8O-51-1; Characteristics of the Population, 1970 Census, 1, Part 1.
263. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Statistics of State School Systems, Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary School Systems, Statistics of Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, and unpublished data.
264. Uzzell, Lawrence. "The Federal Role in Education Policy." *The Wall Street Journal*, December 23, 1982.
265. Van Scotter, R.D., R.J. Draft and John D. Haas. *Foundations of Education*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979.
266. Venable, T.C. "Declining SAT Scores: Some Unpopular Hypotheses." *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1981.
267. Venezky, Richard. "A History of Phonics in American Reading Instruction." Conference Report. *The Reading Informer, 9*, October 1981.
268. Viox, Ruth C. *Evaluating Reading and Study Skills in the Secondary Classroom*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1968.
269. Walcutt, C., J. Lamport, and G. McCracken. *Teaching Reading*. New York: McMillan, 1974.
270. Walcutt, C. "Sounding Out, No! Phonics, Yes!" *Learning, 5*, November 1976, p. 76.
271. Wang, Margaret C. "Mainstreaming Exceptional Children: Some Instructional Design and Implementation Considerations." *The Elementary School Journal, 81*, March 1981, No. 4, pp. 194–221.
272. *NASAA News*. National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Washington, D.C.: September 1983.
273. Welborn, Stanley. "A Nation of Illiterates." *U.S. News and World Report*, May 17, 1982.
274. "What's Ahead in the Curriculum?" *The School Administrator*, American Association of School Administrators, 1978.
275. "What Can Be Done?" *Education USA*, January 10, 1983.
276. "What's the Problem?" *Education USA*, January 10, 1983.
277. White, Theodore H. *America in Search of Itself*. New York: Harper and Row, 1982.
278. Whitmore, Joanne Rand. *Giftedness, Conflict, and Underachievement*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1980.
279. "Who Ruined the Schools?" Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 12, 1983, p. 32.
280. "Why Public Schools Fail." *Newsweek*, April 20, 1981.
281. Williams, Dennis A., et al. "Why Public Schools Are Flunking." *Newsweek*, April 20, 1981.
282. Willms, Doug. "Is There a Private School Advantage?" National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, June 1982.
283. Winn, Marie. *Children Without Childhood*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.
284. Witonski, Peter. *What Went Wrong With American Education*. New York: Arlington House, 1973.
285. Wynn, Richard. "The Relationship of Collective Bargaining and Teacher Salaries, 1960–1980." *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1981.
286. Yarington, David J. *The Great American Reading Machine*. Rochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Book, 1978.
287. Ziegler, Warren L. *Literacy as Self-Discovery*. International Reading Association, Symposium on New Approach to Adult Literacy, Anaheim, California: May 1976.
288. Zigler, Edward, et al. "Is an Intervention Program Necessary in Order to Improve Economically Disadvantaged Children's IQ Scores?" *Child Development*, 1982.

INDEX

Adams, Henry 19
Adelson, Joseph 16, 31, 36, 40
Adult Performance Level (APL) 10–11, 14
Advisory Panel on the Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline 43–45, 48
Aetna Life and Casualty Company 11
AFT, *see* American Federation of Teachers
American Association of Curriculum Development 64
American Association of School Administrators 67
American Association of Secondary Administrators 64
American College Test (ACT) 4, 44, 66, 68, 74
American Education Coalition 60
American Federation of Teachers (AFT) 67
American Institute of Management 63
American Institute of Research 30
American Journal of Psychiatry 51
Anderson, Richard 13, 23
Armbruster, Frank E. 28, 30, 32, 35, 39–42, 44, 52–53, 60
Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) 13
Artley, A. Sterl 24
Association of Departments of English 30
Atkin, J. Myron 40

Bachman, Jerald 58
Bagley, William 18
Barzun, Jacques 30
Bates High School (Annapolis, MD) 81–82
Beck, Isabel 24
Bell, Terrel 57
Bennett, Neville 30
Bestor, Arthur 19, 22, 28
Bilingual Education Act 36–37
Black, Hugo 52
Blackington, Frank 34, 62, 65–66
Bloom, Benjamin 56, 59
Blume, Judy 34
Bode, Boyd 18
Bond, Guy 58
Booker T. Washington High School 60
Boyer, Ernest 21–22, 26–27, 32
Brown, Rexford 44–45
Brunner, Michael 22

California Education Code 38
Carnine, Douglas 23
Carnvale, Anthony 12
Carroll, John S. 25
Caruso, David 53–54
Center for Public Resources 11
Center for the Study of Reading (CSR) 23, 49
Chall, Jeanne S. 12, 23–25, 47–48
Civil Rights Act (1964) 37
Clark, Kenneth B. 25
Clement, John 53
Cohen, Wilbur 54
Coleman, James 16, 25
College Entrance Examination Board 17, 29, 43
Collins, Randall 12
Commission of Humanities 9
Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills 44
Conant, James 20
Conference for Strategies for Generating a Nationwide Adult Right-to-Read Effort 10
Copperman, Paul 25–27, 30–32, 35, 40–41, 44–45, 53, 55
Council for Basic Education 68
Cremin, Lawrence 17
Crow, Lester 30

Daedalus magazine 31, 35
Dallas Times Herald 42
Darling, Sharon 9
Davies, Don 37, 39, 65
Delattre, Edwin 50
Department of Education Act 54
Detterman, Douglas 53–54
Dewey, John 17–18
Dick and Jane basal reader series 22, 27
DISTAR reading program 42
Donovan, Marcella 60
Doyle, Dennis 60
Drucker, Peter 12, 63
Dun and Bradstreet 63
Dykstra, Robert 23

Ebel, Robert 51, 55–56, 62
Edmonds, Ron 41, 62
Education Products Information Exchange Institute 49
Educational Testing Service (ETS) 43
Edwards, Kenneth 12
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 15, 36, 70
English, Fenwick 30, 50
ERIC 57
Etzioni, Amitai 51
Evans, Bertrand 3, 49
Experimental Schools Program 36

Fadiman, Clifton 29, 41
Finn, Chester 57, 64–65, 68
Fisher, Donald 9
Fisher, John S. 25
Fleiger, Howard 30
Flesch, Rudolph 23
Follow Through Project 23
Ford Foundation 29, 68
Fortune Magazine 60
Freeman, Roger 12, 36, 54, 57, 69–70
Friedman, Milton 60
Froese, Victor 24

Gallaudet, Thomas 22
Gallup Poll 32, 39, 52, 60, 65, 67, 73
Gardner, John 31
General Accounting Office (GAO) 13
General Educational Development (GED) 4, 14, 59, 75
Get Set Day Care program (Philadelphia) 54
Glasser, William 21
Gobel, Frank 63
Goodlad, John 31–33, 36–41, 62
Goodman, Ellen 59
Graduate Record Exam (GRE) 44
Grant, Gerald 40, 52
Gray, William S. 24
Groff, Patrick 22
Gross, Beatrice 34
Gross, Ronald 34
Gurren, Louise 23
Guthrie, J. 9

Harman, David 9–11, 13
Harvard Educational Review 10
Head Start program 15, 53–54
Hechinger, Fred 30
Henley, Dale 58
Hicks, William 62

Hirsch, E.D. 13, 47, 62
Hofstadter, Richard 19–20
Hughes, Ann 23
Hunter, Carmen St. John 9–11, 13
Hutchins, Robert M. 19, 52, 62

Illich, Ivan 29
Individual Educational Plan (IEP) 37
International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) 51
International Reading Association 10
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) 44
Iowa Testing Program 44

Jencks, Christopher 16
Johnson, Lyndon B. 15–16, 33
Johnson, Mary 24

Keats, John 19
King, Martin L. 81
Kirsch, I. 9
Koerner, James D. 16, 29, 39, 41, 68
Kottmeyer, William 58

Lerner, Barbara 44, 51, 53
Levine, Kenneth 10
Lieberman, Myron 64
Lippman, Walter 18, 50
Los Angeles Times 29
Lufler, Henry 52
Lyman, Richard 9
Lynch, James 3, 49

McCaslin, Ellen 24
McGuffey's Reader 51
Marquis, Floyd 63
Maslow, Abraham 67
Mason, H. Marc 24
Mayer, Martin 30
Mead, Margaret 30
Metropolitan Readiness Test 53
Micciche, Charles 24
Michaels, Marguerite 77
Minnesota Scholastic Aptitude Test 44
Myers, Donald 30

Naisbitt, John 12
National Academy of Education 25
National Academy of Science 33
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 44, 48
National Center for Educational Statistics 57, 68
National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) 23, 41, 65, 77
National Commission on Libraries and Information Science 9
National Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth 18
National Committee for Citizens in Education 59
National Committee on Reform of Secondary Education 32
National Council of Teachers of English 27
National Defense Education Act 42
National Diffusion Network 4, 57, 75
National Education Association (NEA) 18, 38, 55, 64, 69
National Forum on Excellence in Education 60
National Health Survey (NHS) 9
National Institute of Education (NIE) 9, 11, 22, 57, 68
National Library of Education 68
National Longitudinal Study reading test 43
National Right to Read Conference 9
National School Boards Association 30
National Science Foundation (NSF) 20–22, 27
NEA, *see* National Education Association
Neill, A. S. 28
New Dimensions of the Federal-State Partnership in Education 69
New Republic, The 28
New York State Board of Regents 50
New York State Regent's examination 20
Newsweek 26, 30
Nielsen Report 34
Nystrom, Christine 32

Olmsted, Ann 65–66
Organization of Afro-American Unity 81

Packard, Vance 27
Pei, Mario 27
Peotone Project 54
Piaget, Jean 28–29
Postman, Neil 34
Progressive Education Association 18
Project Talent reading test 43
Prosser, Charles 18

Raspberry, William 60
Ravitch, Diane 15, 17, 19–20, 31, 33, 35, 40–43, 50, 53, 55
Reading Reform Foundation 23–24
Reading Teacher 24
Reagan, Billy 56
Reagan, Ronald W. 30
Reich, Charles 35
Reimer, Everett 29
Report on the Gifted and Talented 50
Rickover, Hyman 19
Rockefeller Brothers Fund 20
Rockefeller Foundation 9
Rosemeller, Richard 50
Royster, Vermont 26–27, 30
Rudd, Mark 30
Rutter, Michael 42

Saturday Review 29
Scheid, Karen 43
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) 3–4, 20, 33, 42, 44, 48, 64, 66, 68, 74
School Discipline 52
Seeley, David S. 69–70
Segal, Judith 50
Sewell, Gilbert 30, 32, 34–35, 37, 70
Shanker, Albert 60
Shapiro, Karl 30
Silber, John 52, 56
Silberman, Charles 29
Smith, Hyrum 57
Smith, Mortimer 19
Sputnik 20, 28, 42
Stabile, Robert 53
Sticht, Thomas 9, 12
Studebaker, John W. 18
Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) 33

Thomas Jefferson Research Center 52
Thompson, Roger 12
Time 19
Tinker, Miles 58
Toledo Public School System (Ohio) 67
Tulane University Education Department 58
Tyack, David 17
Tyler, Ralph 60, 62, 69–70

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 9, 11
U.S. Census Bureau 9, 77
U.S. Department of Education 9, 11, 60, 68
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) 36–37, 54
U.S. Department of Labor 12, 70
U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 13
U.S. News and World Report 30
U.S. Office of Education 10–11, 18, 50
Upper Arlington School District (Ohio) 32
Uzzell, Lawrence 61, 68

Venable, T. C. 44
Venezky, Richard 24
Vietnam War 33

Walcutt, Charles 23
Wall Street Journal 42, 70

West, E.G. 61
West, John 27
Wheat, Harry 19
White, T.H. 31, 35
Whitmore, Joanne 50
Whyte, William H. 19
Wilkinson, John 34
Winn, Marie 32, 34–35
Wood, Robert 37
Woodring, Paul 20

Yankelovich, Daniel 35
Yarington, David 22

Ypsilanti study 53

Zindel, Paul 26
Zorinsky, Edward 66

Council Structure and Functions

The National Advisory Council on Adult Education was established by Congress in 1970, P.L. 91-230, and extended by the Education Amendments of 1984, P.L. 98-511. The fifteen members of the Council are appointed by the President and serve three-year staggered terms, five members' terms expiring each year. The membership includes state and local public school officials, individuals with special expertise and experience in specific areas of adult education, as well as others representative of the general public.

The Council advises the President, the Congress, and Secretary of Education in the preparation of general regulations and with respect to policy matters arising in the administration of the Adult Education Act, including policies and procedures governing the approval of state plans under section 306 of the Act and policies to eliminate duplication, and to effectuate the coordination of programs under the Adult Education Act and other programs offering adult education activities and services.

The Council reviews the administration and effectiveness of programs under the Act, makes recommendations with respect thereto, and makes annual reports to the President of its findings and recommendations (including recommendations for changes in this Act and in other Federal laws relating to adult education activities and services). The President transmits each such report to the Congress together with his comments and recommendations.

Functions and Responsibilities of the Literacy Committee

(These functions and responsibilities were developed and approved by the Committee on August 16, 1983, San Diego, California.)

- Assist in the development of a national standard of literacy which would include accepted definitions of specific levels of illiteracy.
- Develop an awareness of the need for and make recommendations concerning a systematic collection of data in order to determine more accurately the extent of illiteracy in this country.
- Formulate recommendations for prioritizing aid to specific populations of illiterates.
- Investigate the causes of illiteracy and develop recommendations to reduce the problem in the future.
- Review the effectiveness of federal funding designed to improve the levels of literacy and reduce future adult illiteracy.